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Lightfoot alive, despite reports

MUSIC A false rumour about the death of Gordon Lightfoot spread like wildfire online Thursday, prompting the bemused folk legend to address his fans on a live TV news channel to dispute the reports.

"I'm fine, everything is good," Lightfoot, 71, assured all-news station CP24.

Various Canwest papers posted reports Thursday afternoon saying Lightfoot had died and they were quickly picked up all over the Internet.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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- Today — Christine Nesbitt claims long-track gold, page 20

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SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dartmouth's Sarah Conrad airs out of the pipe Thursday during the women's snowboard halfpipe qualifications at the Winter Olympics in West Vancouver, B.C.

Conrad misses out on final

HALFPIPE Sarah Conrad had a tough day in Vancouver.

The Dartmouth halfpipe snowboarder, competing at her second Winter Olympics, scored a 21.4 for her second semifinal run on Cypress Mountain on Thursday to finish 12th. She missed the top-six cut that advanced to the final later that night.

Conrad, who reportedly fell at the bottom of each of her semifinal runs, scored a 17.8 in her first attempt.

Her overall finish is 18th, a slight drop-off from her No. 15 placing at the 2006 Olympics in Turin, Italy.

The 24-year-old was 15th with a 31.2 in her qualification run on Thursday afternoon to qualify for the semifinals.

Conrad, who placed 12th at last year's world championships in Korea, said in an interview with Metro she plans to continue competitive snowboarding for another year after the Olympics, but hasn't committed to anything beyond that.

METRO HALIFAX

Politicians take to the backrooms

NDP accused of violating deal with Liberals, Tories

PAUL MCLEOD
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The leaders and chiefs of staff of the three provincial parties met days before the release of auditor general Jacques Lapointe's expense report to discuss how it would be handled.

Now the parties disagree on whether there was a gentlemen's agreement to not release the names of MLAs involved in parts of the report.

The issue was brought up Thursday when the NDP released a full list of their MLAs who paid staff members through expense accounts and the speaker's office. Lapointe has questioned whether those payments were properly taxed.



Stephen McNeil

But Liberal Leader Stephen McNeil and Tory Leader Karen Casey say they came out of the January backroom meeting believing it would be up to individual MLAs to speak for themselves.

"It was my understanding that the leaders would speak about the global issues and that individual MLAs would be speaking about the issues that pertain to them," McNeil said.

"My interpretation of that meeting; if you're asking me was it that the NDP would put out a release like they did today? No it wasn't."

Casey said she was surprised by the NDP release because she believed there was a "common understanding" that leaders would speak to big picture and MLAs would handle their own issues. But she said it's possible all MLAs agreed to the release.

NDP chief of staff Dan O'Connor said the NDP didn't break an agreement because there was no agreement to break.

"That was a proposal and a practice adopted by the other two parties through their leaders. Our leader and caucus have taken a different approach," he said.

All three parties denied the meeting involved discussion of how to filter information being relayed to the public.

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 3

Grit, Tory stances

- Both opposition parties have left it up to their members to release payment information. Stephen McNeil said the information should only be released if the staff members sign off. The Tories say they sought legal advice and were told releasing details could cause ethical and legal problems.

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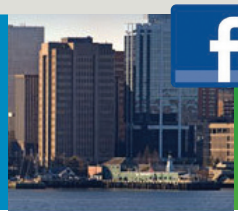
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Navy vessel coming home soon: MacKay

Haiti Crisis

RETURN Defence Minister Peter MacKay says at least one of the navy ships stationed off Haiti will soon be returning to Canada.

HMCS Athabaskan and HMCS Halifax have been helping in the relief effort following a devastating earthquake last month. Both left from Halifax harbour.

MacKay says one of the vessels will be heading home within the next few weeks, but did not specify which one.

He says some of the equipment taken to Haiti on the vessels will remain in the country to help with water purification, road clearing, construction and medical treatment.

He says the return date will depend partly on the need in the impoverished country.

MacKay says the ships were there to provide emergency relief and that non-governmental aid agencies will remain to play a more long-term role. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Dexter led account spending

$54K spent as Opposition leader, the most of anyone in NDP

Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter was the biggest spender in his caucus when it came to using constituency funds to help pay salaries for assistants and cover the costs of other services.

Figures released by the NDP caucus yesterday show Dexter spent a total of $54,000. About $12,000 of that was for seven or eight months salary for his constituency assistant. The other $42,000 went to paying part-time employees as well as some other services such as snow removal and garbage disposal.

The numbers come from a list provided by the Speaker's office outlining payments made from constituency funds between July 2006 and June 2009, when Dexter was the Opposition leader.

"It's a high-volume office. He has extra staff because he was the leader of the Opposition," said Deputy Premier Frank Corbett, speaking for the premier while Dexter is away in Washington.

In total, members of the NDP caucus spent roughly $198,000 on staff and a variety of services and expenses, including office cleaning, snow removal, garbage disposal and severance payments.

The Liberals did not release specifics but said their caucus totalled $188,000. If accurate, that means the Conservatives spent the remaining $210,000.

MLAs say payments were made in this manner because they were directed by the Speaker's office to use a contract for services, rather than a payroll deduction system that was introduced in 2007.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Premier Darrell Dexter speaks with Metro Halifax at the NDP caucus office in this photo from last week. Dexter spent more money on payments to his staff through his expense account than anyone in his caucus.

"It's a high-volume office. (Darrell Dexter) has extra staff because he was leader of the Opposition."
Deputy Premier Frank Corbett

Finance Minister Graham Steele was the most parsimonious NDP member with his constituency allowance account, giving no payments from that pot of money to staff and spending only $550 on other services.

He said he couldn't comment why his colleagues spent more.

"The thing you have to realize about being an MLA is we have no insight into what is going on in other offices. Every office is different, every office is unique," said Steele.

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM PAUL MCLEOD

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Public anger over expenses justified: Steele

SCANDAL Nova Scotia's finance minister says people have every right to be angry about an embarrassing political spending scandal that has dominated the headlines for weeks.

Graham Steele says it's clear that taxpayers' money "has been wasted" and spent on things that should never have been bought.



Graham Steele

As well, he concedes the scandal has made it tougher for him as he travels the province gathering views on how the NDP government should deal with a massive budget deficit.

But the minister says it's important to put things into perspective.

While the scandal involves excessive or inappropriate spending of constituency allowances worth tens of thousands of dollars, Graham says he's looking for ways to reduce a deficit that will be worth $1.3 billion in three years — unless big changes are made.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Health to be focus of G8 meeting

HOSTING Development ministers from G8 countries will meet in Halifax this April to lay the groundwork for talks on maternal and child health.

International Co-operation Minister Bev Oda says the meeting will identify proposals to be discussed by G8 leaders in Muskoka, Ont., in June.

Oda was in Halifax yesterday to make the announcement with Defence Minister Peter MacKay.

She says a central focus of the Halifax meeting will be on ways to improve the health of women and children in developing nations. Oda says it's estimated 500,000 women die in childbirth every year.

Canada will host ministers from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the U.K. and the United States. THE CANADIAN PRESS

N.S. giving extra $25M to hospital

FUNDING The Nova Scotia government is providing another $25 million for a new hospital in Truro that has been plagued by cost overruns.

The project was approved at $104 million in 2005, but inflation, design issues, and mechanical and electrical systems have pushed the cost to $180 million.

Health Minister Maureen MacDonald says the province's contributions will now total $154 million, or roughly 85 per cent of the cost.

Hospital projects are expected to be cost-shared between the government and community, on a 75 to 25 per cent basis.

MacDonald says there will be a review of the process that led to the overruns so future projects are delivered within budget. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Halifax Stanfield International named second-best airport in North America

The Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia says the recent announcement that Halifax Stanfield International Airport was ranked the world's best airport for customer satisfaction in its class and No. 2 for best airport in North America is great news for provincial tourism. The airport was second behind Austin, Texas. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Women in trades get boost

MONIQUE MUISE
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RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Helena Guergis, minister of state for the status of women, left, gets a welding lesson from NSCC student Kimberly Balcom at the Akerley Campus on Thursday. Guergis was in town to announce project funding for the Hypatia Association and the Federation des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Ecosse.

Even as a kid, Petrina Valentine loved cars.

The engines, the transmission systems, the polished bodies — everything about them fascinated her.

"It started when I was really young," the 19-year-old Shubenacadie native said Thursday as she stood over a welding table, a protective visor strapped to her head. "I even remember watching my Dad change his brakes."

Today, Valentine is on track to becoming a fully accredited mechanic through a program at the Nova Scotia Community College. She's one of about a half-dozen women in her class poised to enter a trade traditionally dominated by the opposite sex.

"The guys are very nice, and treat you as one of their own," she said of the men milling around her. "We've had to weld exhaust pipes, take a whole engine apart, cooling lubrications — everything."

Women like Valentine are few and far between in Nova Scotia — making up only about five per cent of all non-traditional tradespersons in the province. On Thursday, the federal government announced $431,000 in new funding for Women Unlimited — a program that is attempting to improve those statistics.

"Using this money, we'll be expanding Women Unlimited into Cape Breton," said Nan Armour, executive director of the Hypatia Association, which runs the program.

"It's tough being a woman in a classroom if you're the only one there, so we try to provide some support."

That support comes in many forms, including mentorships, one-on-one job counselling, and help for women once they enter the workforce as electricians, plumbers, welders, mechanics or even architectural drafters.

"It's nice to have somebody helping us," said Valentine, who hopes to one day open her own auto body shop and staff it with other women working in specialty trades. "I came here for a test drive last year, and there were only two or three other girls. Now we're eight or nine ... it's great."

RCMP justified in Taser use, shooting: Review

POLICE A review by Halifax Regional Police has concluded that the RCMP was justified in its decision to Taser and shoot a man during an altercation in Newfoundland last year.

In August, the RCMP responded to a report of a man attempting to break into a home in Fleur de Lys. The RCMP says the 29-year-old suspect fled to his own property where he allegedly lunged at an officer with a knife after being Tasered.

The force says one officer then fired a single round from his revolver.

Halifax police were enlisted to review the incident and concluded the RCMP was justified to use potentially lethal force to defend the life of another officer. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Charged

- Anthony Walsh is charged with assaulting an officer, assault with a weapon, mischief and uttering threats.

Hockey for Haiti this weekend

FUNDRAISER Giving to a great cause, plus hockey — what could be better?

Hockey Day For Haiti is taking place Sunday at the Halifax Metro Centre. The free event will feature a family skate from 5 to 6:45 p.m., followed by on-ice Canada Games demonstrations, and then a mascot hockey game at 7:45 p.m.

The main attraction for the event comes at 8 p.m. There will be a live broadcast of the Olympic men's hockey game on the SilverVision screen between Canada and the U.S.

Canadian Red Cross officials will also be on-site to accept donations in support of their earthquake relief efforts in Haiti.

While not free, Sunday also features the Halifax Mooseheads and Cape Breton Screaming Eagles at 2 p.m. at the Metro Centre. The Red Cross will also be accepting donations at this event. METRO HALIFAX

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Traffic stop leads to pot bust

The RCMP has arrested a man after seizing 45 kilograms of marijuana during a routine traffic stop in northern New Brunswick. Police say the 27-year-man from Enfield, was pulled over in Siegas on Wednesday. His name has not been released. Police believe the drugs were destined for the Halifax area. THE CANADIAN PRESS



HRM Mayor Peter Kelly.

Kelly calls on vendors to cut pollution

HRM Mayor Peter Kelly is asking the North American pop and snack industry to join an initiative he says will reduce indirect pollution caused by vending machines.

Kelly says if vending machines are fitted with special energy saving devices, the amount of electricity used would be reduced significantly. He has written the presidents of the Canadian branches of Coke and Pepsi, as well as officials of vending machine firms in the city, asking them to fit such devices to their units.

A delegation from the soft-drink and snack industry is in Halifax to meet with the municipality's energy and underground services committee.

The committee is discussing a bylaw amendment that would, if approved by council, make it mandatory for all vending machines in the municipality to be equipped with energy-saving devices. A recent study by city staff determined that each vending machine in Nova Scotia is indirectly responsible for four tonnes of CO2 being released annually into the atmosphere.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bomb threat brings police

MONIQUE MUISE
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SCHOOL Police were called to Sackville High School late Thursday morning in response to a bomb threat.

According to RCMP Const. Tamu Bracken, there was no bomb found in the school, and students were not evacuated.

The threatening phone call appeared to have been made "from a payphone somewhere outside the school" said Bracken.

School Board spokesman Doug Hadley explained that there was never any real risk to students.

"All of our school principals have been trained in threat and risk assessment ... they would have made an assessment as to whether or not they felt it was credible or there was a real threat to the student's safety," Hadley said when asked why students were not pulled out of class.

Police say no one has been arrested or charged in the incident.

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Officials join Girls Soar week

EXERCISE Girls young and old will join government officials and Halifax Olympian Adrienne Power on Friday for the launch of Girls Soar Physical Activity Week 2010.

The event will take place at the Keshen Goodman Library in Clayton Park with Active Halifax Communities joining organizers of the 2011 Canada Winter Games to conduct a dry-land synchronized swimming demonstration that all who attend can participate in.

In addition, community leaders will talk about the importance of physical activity and Active Halifax Communities will announce the opportunities available at this year's activity week, to be held from next Monday through Friday. The week-long celebration looks to motivate and educate girls between the ages of nine and 18 about making physical fitness part of their lives.

METRO HALIFAX

Local First World War hero to be awarded for distinguished service

REMEMBRANCE A private from Nova Scotia who single-handedly destroyed a German machine gun nest during the First World War is posthumously being awarded the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service

Pte. Jeremiah Jones also captured the crew of the machine gun nest at Vimy Ridge in April 1917.

The Canadian Forces says Dr. B.A. (Rocky) Jones will accept the award on behalf of his grandfather at a ceremony on Monday in Truro.

METRO HALIFAX

Courage

- Jones was one of 16 black soldiers serving in the 106th Battalion of the Nova Scotia Rifles who saw action on the front line.

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MLA set to hire new constituency assistant soon

Truro-Bible Hill MLA Lenore Zann hopes to have her new constituency assistant in place in a week's time. Seven of the 35 applicants were interviewed Tuesday and reference checks are now underway. Zann and her former constituency assistant Susan MacQuarrie parted ways on Jan. 26. **TRURO DAILY NEWS**

N.B. MLA sorry, back in house

LEGISLATURE A New Brunswick politician has apologized, a week after making rude gestures that got him suspended from the provincial legislature for three days.

Abel LeBlanc — the Liberal member for Saint John Lancaster — was allowed to return to his seat on Thursday. He was expelled after raising his middle finger twice and waving his fist during a verbal attack on Opposition members last Thursday.

Much of the outburst was directed at Conservative Margaret-Ann Blaney, while the fist wave was directed at Conservative Dale Graham, who LeBlanc called "a punk." The entire exchange was broadcast on the legislature's live television feed.

LeBlanc said Thursday he was sorry.

"Mister Speaker, I stand here this afternoon to apologize to yourself, your staff and the decorum of this house," he said.

"The things that I did were unacceptable and I apologize for that. I would also like to apologize to the people in the province of New Brunswick who have probably been offended in some form or way."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Opposition

- Outside the house, Tory house leader Paul Robichaud said LeBlanc's apology should have been directed at the two members he attacked.

Casey won't bat in race for N.S. Tory chief

Former MP 'happy' with current Ottawa job

As much as his name has been bandied about as a potential candidate, former Cumberland-Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley MP Bill Casey will not be running for the Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative leadership.

"I'm not considering at this time," Casey said. "I had 20 years at the political game and politics completely consumes your life. I made a decision a year ago to leave politics and I completely enjoy what I do now."

Casey, who was re-elected as an Independent MP in October 2008, announced early last year that he was leaving politics to accept a job as the province's intergovernmental affairs representative in Ottawa.

"My federal political career is over and a year later I am still happy with my decision," Casey said. "I missed the intensity of being in Parliament and politics because you're involved 24-7, but that's also the reason I don't miss it."



Bill Casey

Soon after he was ejected from the federal Conservative caucus for voting against the federal budget, the veteran member of Parliament, first elected in 1988, was touted as being a possible replacement for then-Premier Rodney MacDonald and former Cumberland North MLA Ernest Fage.

Asked if he could change his mind, Casey said he can't see the circumstances changing to that point. He said he enjoys the life he is now living, including having his wife, Rosemary, staying with him in Ottawa.

"That's something we couldn't do before because I was coming and going so much," he said.

AMHERST DAILY NEWS

No candidates

- The Tory leadership convention is set for this October in Halifax. At this point, no one has put their name forward as a candidate for the vacant position.



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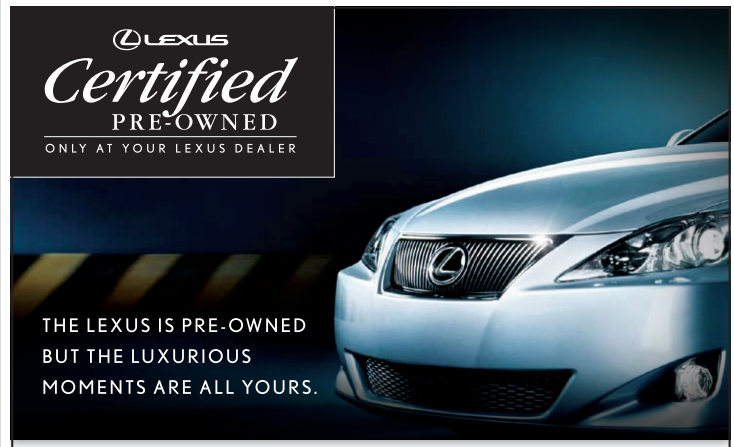
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the Bay

Biden scare sparks revamp of security at the Games

Vancouver Olympic officials say they have changed security arrangements after a mentally ill man breached security at the opening ceremonies last week and approached the area where U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden was sitting. The officials say the 48-year-old man had no weapon and posed no threat. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada



Senior drivers get help

A website — www.olderdriversafety.ca — was unveiled Thursday to help older drivers stay safe on the road and make decisions about when they should retire their car keys. Statistics show a driver over 75 is 3.5 times more likely to be involved in a crash per mile than a 35- to 40-year-old driver. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Enough, says Games boss

Critics have overdone it, he complains

Give us a break, people. That's message from the head of the Vancouver Olympics.

John Furlong admits the 2010 Games have had their share of mistakes, but he thinks the criticism has been overblown.

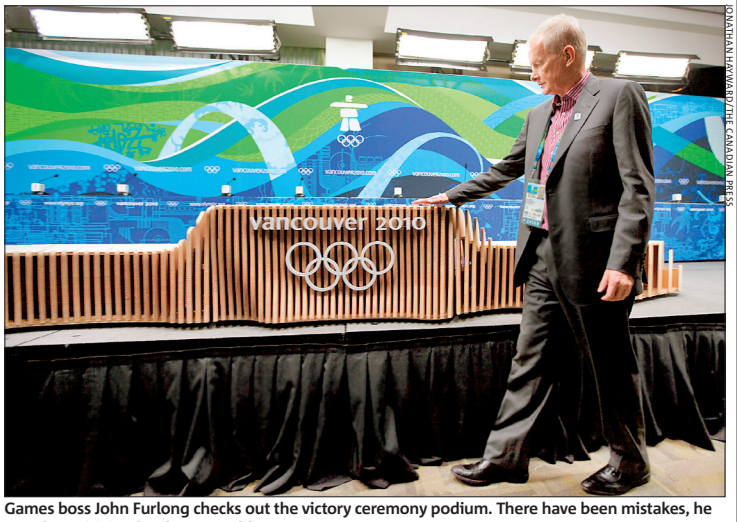
"I've read some things that I didn't like reading and I don't believe it's true," Furlong, the CEO of the organizing committee, told reporters.

"But having said that, when we make mistakes and things don't go well, you have to fix them."

The media have pounced on glitches that have befallen the Games.

Scathing headlines and editorials have asked why the International Olympic Committee even gave the city the Olympics.

Writers have asked: How could Vancouver organizers be so badly prepared?



JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Games boss John Furlong checks out the victory ceremony podium. There have been mistakes, he says, but criticism has been overblown.

Furlong's message: Calm down.

When an ice-resurfacing machine failed at the Richmond speedskating oval, a new one was immediately brought in, said Furlong.

"The most important thing is that the field of play is perfect and that it continues to be perfect."

"So whatever decisions we have to make have to take priority over anything else."

It's about how the fires are being put out, he said, not how many there are.

"What we're trying to do on a daily basis is to take the day we're in and improve on it the day after."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Last WW1 vet dies ... and an era ends

HERO He was an unlikely and reluctant figurehead for a generation of heroes.

John Babcock, the last known veteran of Canada's First World War army, died Thursday at the age of 109.

He went in search of military glory at the age of 16, when he tried to sneak his way on to the front lines in France.

"I wanted to go to France because I was just a tin soldier," Babcock said in an interview in July 2007.

His ruse was discovered, however, and he never made it to the battlefield.

He was born July 23, 1900 on a farm in Ontario and emigrated to the U.S. in the 1920s.

"I wanted to go to France because I was just a tin soldier."
John Babcock in 2007

"I volunteered (for the front lines), but they found out I was underage. If the war had lasted another year I would have fought."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in a statement Thursday announcing Babcock's death, said: "As a nation, we honour his service and mourn his passing."

He added: "The passing of Mr. Babcock marks the end of an era." THE CANADIAN PRESS

m.metronews.ca

ScanLife

The success of District 9 has it Canadian creators on whirlwind worldwide tour of elite events and private parties. Scan this code for the story.

News in brief

CRIME Col. Russell Williams, former chief of Trenton forces base, appeared in court via video to face first-degree murder charges Thursday. He wore an orange jumpsuit and appeared unshaven.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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All vehicle leases exclude license, registration, insurance and applicable taxes. †The Complimentary Maintenance Program provides the services outlined in the Factory Recommended Maintenance Schedule that accompanies every Toyota vehicle. The Schedule is based on either time or kilometres, whichever occurs first. Service intervals must be followed per the Schedule. Some exclusions may apply. Services beyond regularly scheduled maintenance or components not included in your maintenance schedule become the responsibility of the owner. Consult your Toyota Dealership for more details. The Toyota Complimentary Maintenance Program will be offered for a limited time only on new Canadian Toyota vehicles sold on or after February 2, 2010. Offer subject to change. 2Limited time purchase financing offer provided through Toyota Financial Services on approved credit on new retail sales of qualifying models. Representative finance example based upon $15,000 financed at 0% APR equals $416.67 per month for 36 months. $0 down payment or equivalent trade-in may be required. Cost of borrowing is $0, for a total obligation of $15,000. Taxes, freight and PDI, license, insurance, registration and applicable duties, lewies and fees are extra. Time limited offer at participating dealerships. Offer subject to change/cancellation without notice. 3Make No Payments for 120 Days when you purchase finance a new unregistered Toyota vehicle through Toyota Financial Services. Offer applies on approved credit to retail customers who purchase and take delivery by March 1, 2010. The first monthly payment will be deferred for 90 days (until the 120th day of the contract) and finance contracts will be extended accordingly. Interest charges will not accrue during the first 90 days of the contract. After 90 days, interest starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay principal and interest over the term of the contract. 4Toyota Loyalty Program (TLP) offer is available to current registered owners/lessees of a Toyota branded vehicle (registered and insured in Canada for at least 6 months prior to TLP purchase) or immediate family members with whom they are domiciled, when they purchase/finance/lease and take retail delivery of a new unregistered 09/10/11 Toyota branded vehicle between February 2 - March 1, 2010. Proof of current address and registration/insurance/lease required. TOYOTA/TMMC/TCCE employees/contractors and daily rentals are not eligible for TLP offer. Limit of one TLP offer per registered owner per registered vehicle. No more than one TLP offer may be used towards the purchase/lease of a single new vehicle. See your Toyota Dealer to determine if tax applies before or after the application of the offer in your jurisdiction. Dealer order/trade may be necessary. TLP offer subject to change without notice. See your dealer or www.toyota.ca for complete offer details. **Customer Incentive offers valid on delivery of select new unregistered Toyota vehicles, when delivered from a Canadian Toyota dealership. Vehicle must be registered and delivered by March 1, 2010. Customer Incentive offer ends March 1, 2010. See your Toyota Dealer to determine if tax applies before or after the application of the offer in your jurisdiction. Offer is subject to change without notice. See your Toyota dealer for details. ††Complimentary Job Loss Credit Protection is offered by Toyota Credit Canada Inc. ("Toyota Credit" or "TFS") and available to eligible retail customers who purchase or lease one of the following vehicles through TFS between February 2 and March 1, 2010: new and demonstrator Yaris Hatchback, Yaris Sedan, Corolla, Matrix, Camry, Sienna and RAV4 models. The program provides up to $10,000 in credit protection to consumers who suffer an unexpected job loss during the term of their lease or financing contract, provide proof that they are collecting unemployment benefits and return their vehicle to their Toyota dealer. Excludes charges for excess wear and tear, excess kilometres, unrepaired damages and similar charges. Program only applies to natural persons, over the age of 18, who suffer Involuntary Unemployment (as defined in the contract) and who meet the other eligibility criteria. Program does not apply to corporations, companies, associations, self-employed people, seasonal employees, employees of TFS or employees under a fixed term contract. Eligible consumers will be required to make regular monthly payments while their claim is evaluated. Further conditions and limitations apply. For complete details, ask your Toyota dealer. ¥Graduate program allowance of $500 on 2008/2009 Yaris Hatchback, Yaris Sedan, and RAV4 as 2009/2010 Corolla and Matrix. Must be within four months of graduation, or have graduated within the last four years, from an accredited Canadian university or college. The four-year eligibility period will be measured from the date shown on the graduate's diploma. Applications outside the specific forty-eight month period cannot be accepted. ‡‡Camry LE/Venza AWD fuel economy based on automatic transmission. Corolla CE fuel economy based on manual transmission. Individual dealer may sell/lease for less. Vehicles may not be exactly as shown. Offers valid until March 1, 2010. See your participating Toyota dealer for details.

OFFICIAL PARTNER OF THE TORONTO 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Sask. couple wins big on lottery
A couple from a small town in northeast Saskatchewan are counting their blessings after winning $20 million on a $5 lottery ticket. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Whistler turning its trash into big cash

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

GARBAGE There's more than one kind of Olympic gold in them thar hills.

Whistler Village is turning mountains of garbage, and rivers of — well, let's just say gold and bronze — into black gold at its spanking new, if rather malodorous, multimillion-dollar composting facility.

The 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and Whistler have been selling themselves as the greenest Games ever. The municipality of Whistler, along with nearby Pemberton and Squamish, are doing their part.

While the trash volume at the village transfer station hasn't yet reached Olympian proportions, Whistler's municipal operations manager Ron Sander says the sewage system was near 95 per cent capacity on the Games' opening weekend and that the peak flow appears to be holding steady.

All that sewage is being handled by a brand new, environmentally sensitive waste-water treatment plant that sits adjacent to the Whistler athletes village. The $38.5 million treatment facility wasn't part of the Olympic project.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Costs

- The resort town's many hotels and restaurants are encouraged to compost by economic incentives. They're charged $120 a tonne to dump trash but only $75 a tonne for biodegradable materials.




THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Roger Warren, right, is escorted from an RCMP van to the courthouse in Yellowknife in this 1994 file photo. The Supreme Court has rejected a $10-million damage award for widows of the miners slain during Yellowknife's bitter 1992 Giant Mine dispute.

Widows' lose court claim

The Supreme Court of Canada has rejected a $10-million damage award for widows of the miners slain during Yellowknife's bitter 1992 Giant Mine dispute, striking down earlier rulings that found government, unions and private security forces all bore some responsibility for one of Canada's worst outbreaks of labour violence.

The ruling finally brings to an end the long, bitter legal legacy of the strike, which was marked by a deliberately set underground explosion that killed nine replacement workers.

"It's deeply disappointing," said Edmonton lawyer Jeff Champion, who for 15 years has been representing the widows attempt to get compensation through the courts.

"But in many aspects, we have prevailed on a couple of important points. Some important legal principles have been established."

In September 1992, striking miner Roger Warren set and exploded a bomb in the mine, which had been operating with replacement workers. Warren was convicted in 1995 of nine counts of murder and is serving a life sentence.

The widows of the nine victims as well as James O'Neil — the first man on the scene of the bombing — sued the Canadian Auto Workers, the government of the Northwest Territories and security company Pinkerton's of Canada.

They argued that the owners and the union should have known the dangers and had a duty to protect the victims.

A lower court agreed in 2004 and ordered the defendants to pay $10.7 million. The Northwest Territories Court of Appeal overturned that decision, along with the award, and the widows appealed to the Supreme Court.

In Thursday's decision, the Supreme Court ruled that although the government and private security were responsible for providing a reasonable level of security, the original trial judge didn't use the correct legal means to find that they'd breached that responsibility.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec eyes immigration sharks

LAW Quebec is cracking down on unethical immigration consultants.

The provincial government says only lawyers, notaries, and members of the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants will be allowed to represent immigration candidates.

To have a right to practice, consultants will need to pass a test, demonstrate a knowledge of French, have a clean track record, and register with the Canadian society of consultants.

The government says it could also impose fines of up to $50,000, and revoke someone's right to practice.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Former NYPD commissioner sentenced
Former New York City police Commissioner Bernard Kerik, who nearly became chief of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, was sentenced to four years behind bars Thursday for eight felonies, including filing false taxes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Dalai Lama calls China 'childish'

After his meeting with U.S. President Barrack Obama, the Dalai Lama is chiding China for its "childish" and "limited" approach to Tibetan efforts for greater rights within China. Obama welcomed the Dalai Lama for closely-watched White House talks Thursday, risking fallout in China over the get-together and Obama's statement supporting preservation of Tibet's identity and human rights. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Plane flown into Texas building

Officials say pilot left long note on Internet railing against the IRS

A software engineer furious with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service plowed his small plane into an Austin, Texas, office building housing nearly 200 federal tax employees on Thursday, officials said, setting off a raging fire that sent workers fleeing as thick plumes of black smoke poured into the air.



HARRY CABLUCK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Smoke billows from a seven-story building after a small plane crashed into it in Austin, Texas Thursday.

An official identified the pilot as Joseph Stack — whose home was set on fire just before the crash — and said investigators were looking at an anti-government message on the Web linked to him. The Web site outlines problems with the IRS and says violence "is the only answer."

Federal law enforcement officials have said they were investigating whether the pilot, who is presumed to have died, slammed into the building on purpose in an effort to blow up IRS offices. All the officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing.

"Violence not only is the answer, it is the only answer," the long note on Stack's Web site reads, citing past problems with the tax-collecting agency.

"I saw it written once that the definition of insanity is repeating the same process over and over and expecting the outcome to suddenly be different. I am finally ready to stop this insanity. Well, Mr. Big Brother IRS man, let's try something different; take my pound of flesh and sleep well," the note, dated Thursday, reads.

Crews found two bodies in the buidling and two people were hospitalized, said Austin Fire Department Division Chief Dawn Clopton. About 190 IRS employees work in the building, and IRS spokesman Richard C. Sanford said the agency was trying to account for all workers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shortage of mules cause for concern

CUBA Will all Cuban mules please stand up? The communist government says it is facing a major mule deficit and has commissioned a census of the animals to determine how bad the problem is.

Authorities tell the government news agency AIN that the island may be facing a deficit of 8,000 in highlands areas alone. The agency praised the animals as "very important for the transportation of food in mountainous areas." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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ScanLife

Things are looking grim for U.S. Democrats, but right wing infighting may put help halt their sliding fortunes. Scan this code for the story.

Allies encounter fresh resistance

AFGHANISTAN American-led forces control the main roads and markets in the besieged Taliban stronghold of Marjah, a U.S. Marine general said Thursday. Marines and Afghan soldiers encountered better-fortified Taliban positions and more skilled marksmen on the sixth day of the assault, indicating Taliban resistance in their logistics centre was far from crushed. A British general said he expected it would take another month to secure the town. NATO said four soldiers died Thursday, bringing the number of allied troops killed in the offensive to 10. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pakistan captures more Taliban leaders: Report

KARACHI Pakistani authorities, aided by U.S. intelligence, have apprehended more Afghan Taliban chiefs following the capture of the movement's No. 2 figure — arrests that together represent the biggest blow to the insurgents since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

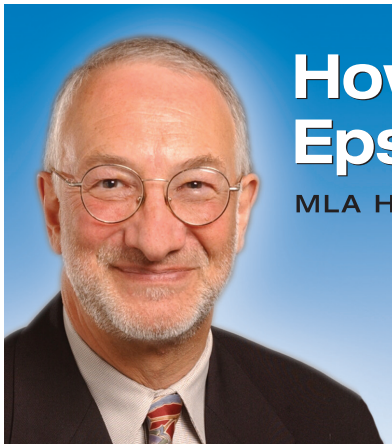
More than a dozen Taliban leaders were arrested, including known associates of Osama bin Laden.

Hundreds of militants were holding out against a six-day-old assault by 15,000 U.S., NATO and Afghan troops. Nine Taliban militants linked to al-Qaida were nabbed in three raids late Wednesday and early Thursday near Karachi, Pakistani intelligence officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Communications intercepted by U.S. authorities played a key role in tracking and arresting the suspects, the officials said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shadow gov't

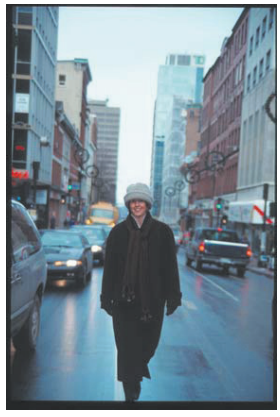
- Two Taliban shadow governors also were apprehended in separate raids, Afghan and Pakistani officials said without giving specifics.



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MLA Halifax Chebucto

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French mayor finds halal burger joint's menu "not acceptable"

A French mayor has filed a legal complaint against a fast food restaurant because it serves only burgers made according to Islamic dietary law. Roubaix Mayor Rene Vandierendonck said he wants the Quick burger chain to expand their menu, adding "the fact that they do not offer other choices to non-Muslim clients is not acceptable." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Switzerland may appoint animal defence lawyers

GENEVA Lawyer Antoine F. Goetschel feels uncomfortable talking about one of his recent clients. And it isn't just because he lost the case.

"Fish don't get much sympathy," he explains.

That's doubly true for the unnamed dead pike whose cause Goetschel took up this month over torture allegations, since the battle between the beast and the angler who caught him lasted over 10 minutes.

Goetschel is Europe's only animal lawyer and the figurehead for a movement to expand Zurich's pioneering legal system across Switzerland.

Voters will decide in a March 7 poll whether every region should be required to appoint an animal lawyer to represent pets and farm animals in court — a dedicated public prosecutor for vertebrates that have been abused by humans. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Homeless survivors plagued by rain, mud

Haiti Crisis

A heavy downpour sent the throngs living beside Haiti's shattered national palace cowering under tarps early Thursday as the rush of water made much of the camp of earthquake victims impassable — an ominous foretaste of the rainy season to some.

Amputees struggled to manoeuvre through mud on crutches and wheelchairs. Many in the makeshift tent cities housing nearly 600,000 people in Haiti's capital still live without even plastic tarps, which the international community is trying to get to everyone by May 1.

So when the rain comes, bed sheets spread on sticks as protection from the sun quickly get soaked and people move in temporarily with neighbours who have waterproof tents. The lucky actually have beds off the ground.

"It's hard to keep my kids clean. There's too much rain, too much dirt," said Joseph Dukens, 25, at the camp beside the national palace.

The government, aid groups and foreign governments have been wrangling for five weeks over how to house survivors, but neither the weather nor the people are waiting.

Makeshift camps have hardened into shantytowns, adding a new dimension to the capital's teeming slum life with an extra helping of disease, hunger and misery brought on by the Jan. 12 disaster, which killed more than 200,000 people.

While the camps blossomed, officials debated what to do with the 1.2 million people left homeless by the disaster.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Route de Piste

- The delay in finding permanent housing has caused complications, as evident on a boulevard called Route de Piste, where a cluster of ramshackle villages has taken root. The new neighbourhood is packed; some 27,000 people live there, according to Haitian Red Cross workers officials are directing aid to the site, while also designating it a "priority for decongestion" — meaning some people must leave. But property is hard to come by, aftershocks continue, and 38 per cent of Port-au-Prince's buildings have been destroyed.

Taiwan **Hoping for families**



WALLY SANTANA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A young boy holds his sister as their family prays at a local temple for the Chinese Lunar New Year in Taipei, Taiwan on Thursday. A Taiwanese official has urged citizens to procreate amid fears the Year of the Tiger may bring reduced reproduction on the island, which has one of the world's lowest birth rates.

Niger's president missing after armed soldiers storm palace

NIAMEY Renegade soldiers in armoured vehicles stormed Niger's presidential palace with a hail of gunfire during broad daylight Thursday in an apparent coup attempt in the West African nation.

Military music played on state radio later in the evening — the same music that aired after two previous coups in the late 1990s — and the strongman president's whereabouts was unknown. Government officials could not be reached for comment.

Smoke rose from the palace complex and the echo of machine-gunfire for at least 20 minutes sent residents running for cover, emptying the desert country's downtown boulevards at midday.

Traore Amadou, a local journalist who was in the presidency when the shooting began, said President Mamadou Tandja was kidnapped by mutinous troops. It was unclear if the septuagenarian leader was still at the palace.

Tandja first took power in democratic elections in 1999 that followed an era of coups and rebellions. But instead of stepping down as mandated by law on Dec. 22, he triggered a political crisis by pushing through a new constitution last August that removed term limits and gave him near-totalitarian powers. Niger has become increasingly isolated since then, with the 15-nation regional bloc of West African states suspending Niger from its ranks and the U.S. cutting off non-humanitarian aid.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





New Russian museum exhibit honours American soldier
It honours the life of Joseph R. Beyrle, believed to be one the few soldiers to fight for the U.S. and Soviet Union in World War II. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai death reminds of spy agency's handiwork

The death of a Hamas operative in Dubai at the hands of a squad of burly hit men conjures up images of the string of killings that followed the murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics and a bungled attempt to poison a Hamas leader in Jordan 13 years ago.

Israel's Mossad spy agency — the prime suspect in the death of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh last month in Dubai — has known both triumph and embarrassment in decades of covert warfare, and the latest episode would appear to include elements of each.

The killers, whoever they are, got their man and escaped. But they were caught on video and left behind what appears to be significant evidence: A Dubai police force, competent perhaps beyond the agents' expectations, found that at least seven of them used the names of real Israelis with European passports.

The Mossad is suspected of several violent incidents in the Mideast in recent years, such as the killing of a top Hezbollah officer in the heart of Damascus in 2008. But its reputation — particularly in the Arab world, where it is often seen as an ominous force behind unexplained events — goes back decades.

In 1972, armed Palestinians raided the rooms of Israel's Olympic team in Munich, killed two athletes and took nine hostage. A botched rescue attempt by German police ended in the deaths of all of the Israelis in a wild shootout at a nearby military airfield.

Golda Meir, Israel's prime minister at the time, ordered the Mossad to kill those responsible, partly as revenge and partly to deter future attacks. That directive launched an unprecedented covert offensive that saw a string of Palestinian operatives — many of them not directly connected to the Munich massacre — gunned down or blown up across Europe and the Middle East.

Some Palestinian operatives were killed by bullets or bombs in Rome, Nicosia, Athens and elsewhere, and the myth of the Mossad — ruthless and skilful with unlimited resources and reach — was born.

The covert war might be ugly, but it is a necessity, said Rafi Sutton, 78, who served as a Mossad agent in Europe in the 1970s.

"If we, the citizens of Israel, want this state to continue to exist, we must be ready to fight for it day and night, in the light and also in the darkness," he said.

"If we, the citizens of Israel, want this state to continue to exist, we must be ready to fight for it day and night."
Rafi Sutton, former Mossad agent

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Columbia **Grim protest**



FERNANDO VERGARA / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man using a skull costume breathes through an oxygen mask during a protest against a package of government's decrees for the health sector in Bogota, Colombia on Thursday.

School doing its own spying?

LAWSUIT A suburban Philadelphia school district used school-issued laptop webcams to spy on students at home, potentially catching them and their families in compromising situations, a family claims in a federal lawsuit.

Officials at the school district can activate webcams on the computers without students' knowledge or permission, the lawsuit alleges. Plaintiffs Michael and Holly Robbins suspect the cameras captured students and family members as they undressed and in other embarrassing situations, according to the suit.

The school district could not immediately confirm whether it has the ability to activate the computer webcams remotely, said spokesman Doug Young.

"We can categorically state that we are and have always been committed to protecting the privacy of our students," he said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alleged bad dad pleads not guilty

DENIAL A man pleaded not guilty Thursday after police say he told them he threw his three-month-old daughter off a bridge, as searchers and relatives held out hope that the infant might be found alive.

Shamsid-Din Abdur-Raheem, 21, appeared composed during his arraignment in New Jersey via video link from jail, where he is being held on $700,000 cash bail.

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Comment

Prosecute cheaters; reform system

UrbanCompass



Yes, the MLA expenses scandal is a scandal. Some of what some MLAs filed as legitimate expenses were not. A few claims may even be criminal. Let's make MLAs pay back what they can't justify, and prosecute those whose actions crossed the line. Let's fix a screwed-up system. Then let's move on.

When it comes to scandalous wastes of taxpayers' dollars, MLA expenses represent a piddling amount, even within the auditor general's report that started the current tsunami of public outrage.

The auditor general's report painted with a broad brush, flagging items he deemed excessive, lacked receipts or were otherwise questionable without digging deeper to determine which might actually be justifiable.

While many expenses — can you say the Dance Dance Revolution video game in the hands of ex-Tory MLA Len Goucher's grandson, or the patio furniture in Liberal Dave Wilson's backyard? — seem indefensible, others are more iffy.

Take ex-premier Rodney MacDonald's $3,250 purchase of a projection screen for presentations. Hardly something for your rec room. MacDonald says community groups still use it. Did he pay too much? Should such items be paid out of constituency expenses? Good questions. But neither justifies labelling MacDonald a pig or a crook.

Or take the pink Nano — valued at $261.06 — that shows up among NDP MLA Leonard Preyra's expenses. Preyra says he donated it to the Italian-Canadian Cultural Association of Nova Scotia for a fundraiser. He's not alone.

NDP Transportation Minister Bill Estabrooks proudly acknowledges he spent much of his flagged $44,424 in advertising, donations and gifts on local schools and sports teams. Should MLAs use constituency funds to help not-for-profit groups and teams? Another good question. But is doing so a flogging offence?

And while the auditor general noted more than half of legislative members — 28 of 51 — filed duplicate receipts, the report shows the total cost was $14,123, or approximately $92.31 per MLA per year of the audit.

"The types of wrongdoing … and the scale of it … simply would not warrant more work from my office," the auditor general initially said. Partly because of the outcry and new information he's received, he is now looking at possible criminality. Go for it. Prosecute the cheaters.

Then let's reform the system: Make new expense rules in public, require tendering for purchases, demand receipts for everything and then publish every MLA's expense report every month on the web.

With those — easy — changes in place, let's finally turn our attention to the same auditor general's report, which identifies a $52-million windfall private developers get to pocket from those infamous P-3 school projects.

Now that's scandalous!

Stephen Kimber, the Rogers Communications Chair in Journalism at the University of Kings College, is the author of eight books.

Views

The allure of GPS programming while driving

Marketplace



Here in Vancouver, hordes of people have descended for the Olympics. Most out-of-towners are wandering through the streets on foot — but some brave souls have decided to battle the traffic in vehicles. And to help navigate the way to Olympic venues, a trusty GPS directs tourists to Whistler, Richmond and elsewhere.

Fortunately, a lot of these drivers have a passenger in the car to plug in directions. But a CBC Marketplace poll found — across Canada — that's often not the case. Almost half the time (47 per cent), drivers said they personally program their navigation devices while the car is in motion — dangerous because 80 per cent of car accidents happen when drivers take their eyes off the road.

And check out the latest statistics from police. In Ontario, lawmakers made it illegal as of Feb. 1 to use a handheld device (like cellphones and a GPS) while driving. In Toronto alone, in the first week of February, cops handed out 1,499 tickets under the "distracted driving law."

And why are people programming on the go? Because they can. Makers of portable GPS devices say they're not responsible if people don't drive safely. When it comes to a GPS built right into a vehicle, some automakers offer GPS systems that lock out drivers from programming while the car is in motion — some don't.

Transport Canada has known for years that programming a GPS while driving may be a hazard. In 2003, it was looking at whether or not to regulate the use of these devices in moving vehicles. But no deal was ever made with the makers of GPS devices built into cars (and the agency has no mandate over the portable navigators).

Erica Johnson is a journalist and co-host of Marketplace, which airs each Friday at 8:30 p.m. on CBC Television.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

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Abbey Road studios for sale
Britain's National Trust may intervene to protect the Abbey Road studios where the Beatles recorded most of their hits. The London studios are being put up for sale by the cash-strapped record company EMI. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Retail Giving away the store



DOUG BEGHTEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bob Moore, of Milwaukie, Ore., speaks with employee Lan Hughes. Moore celebrated his 81st birthday Wednesday by transfering his entire whole-grain production business to his employees. The business includes a retail store and restaurant .

Inflation at 1.9%

Gas, cars drive numbers up

Canada's inflation rate shot up to attention-grabbing levels last month as higher prices for cars, gas and vehicle insurance pushed the consumer price index to a 14-month high.

All the inflation indicators rose in January: the overall consumer price index jumping by more than half-a-point to 1.9 per cent, the Bank of Canada's core index hit two per cent and the month-to-month index increased 0.3 per cent.

January's increase means the annual rate has gone from minus 0.9 per cent to a positive 1.9 per cent in four months.

Scotia Capital economist Derek Holt said the "stickiness" of underlying core inflation may cause Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney to consider moving off his conditional commitment to keep interest rates at historic lows until July.

What will be worrying Carney is that prices didn't drop as much as expected during the crisis last year and may now outpace expectations during the recovery, Holt said. "The bank has pretty much all the rationale to hike now," Holt said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Inflation rates

2.8%	Halifax
2.1%	Montreal
1.9%	Ottawa

Bing, Yahoo ready to roll

ONLINE Microsoft Corp. and Yahoo Inc. have received clearance from regulators in Washington and Europe to proceed with a search partnership intended to challenge Google Inc.

The companies announced yesterday that the partnership has been approved without restrictions by the Justice Department and the European Commission. Under the agreement, Microsoft's Bing search engine will steer search-related ads on Yahoo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Whistler to go on auction block

PROPERTY Whistler — the ski resort hosting glamorous Alpine events at the Winter Games — may be headed for the auction block. It's owned by a New York hedge fund, and creditors are calling an auction to put Whistler and other property up for sale Friday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Dental adhesives pulled over possible health risks

The manufacturer of the Poli-Grip brand, is pulling its zinc-containing denture adhesives from the Canadian market because long-term excessive use of the products could pose a health risk. GlaxoSmithKline will move to zinc-free versions. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business in brief

GOLD Barrick Gold Corp. will grow its reserves and increase the earning potential of its African operations with two separate strategic moves, the world's biggest gold miner announced Thursday. As Toronto-based Barrick reported a fourth-quarter profit of $215 million US, reversing a year-earlier loss, it also announced that it plans to spin off its African operations into a new publicly traded company that will be called African Barrick Gold and listed on the London Stock Exchange.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toyota president asked to testify on recalls

AUTO The chairman of a House committee investigating Toyota's recalls said Thursday the company's president should testify at a hearing next week, citing questions from American motorists on "whether it is safe to drive their cars."

Akio Toyoda, the grandson of the Japanese automaker's founder, had said previously that he did not plan to attend a series of hearings scheduled to start on Capitol Hill next week. But he had told reporters in Japan earlier that he would consider appearing if invited.

Rep. Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, wrote Toyoda that the committee wants him to "clarify" how the car manufacturer is addressing a widening recall crisis.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New rules may force buyers to alter plans

Some Canadians in expensive real estate markets may have to change their game plans for buying a first home because of new rules announced by the federal government.

While the changes are unlikely to be a deterrent for most Canadians, it could make it harder for those on the fringes to qualify for mortgages, industry observers say.

"You'll have the odd marginal purchaser who might be affected by this but I think that these are reasonable ways to keep spending in check," says Dale Ripplinger, president of the Canadian Real Estate Association.

The changes are designed to prevent Canadians from taking on too much debt ahead of expected interest rate increases later this year.

It's a situation that contributed to the housing crisis in the United States.

As of April 19, all borrowers must meet the requirements of five-year fixed-rate mortgages, even if they opt for lower variable rates. The change would raise the income required to purchase a house, but not necessarily monthly payments.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Changes

- The changes announced by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty include reducing the amount of equity a homeowner can take out of their property to 90 per cent, and requiring a 20 per cent down payment for government-backed mortgage insurance on "speculative" investment properties.

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Bearcats trounce Lions 6-1

Former Halifax Mooseheads forward Eric Louis-Seize scored twice as the Truro Bearcats downed the host Halifax Lions 6-1 in Maritime Junior A Hockey League play on Thursday night at the Forum. Kyle Dilosa scored in the loss. METRO HALIFAX

Sports



Kirkpatrick gunning for title

Former Dartmouth Subways star Michael Kirkpatrick is in contention for a QMJHL scoring title. With 11 games to go, the Saint John Sea Dogs forward from North Sydney has 73 points in 56 games, tied for fifth in the Q and 10 points behind leader Nicolas Deschamps of the Moncton Wildcats. METRO HALIFAX

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Halifax forward Eric Crookshank is averaging 14.8 points per game this year.

Right where they want to be

MATTHEW WUEST
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The Halifax Rainmen are halfway home.

Ten games into the 20-game Premier Basketball League schedule, the Rainmen are right where they want to be.

With an 8-2 record, they're closing in on first overall, challenging for a playoff spot and boast the stingiest defence in the PBL.

It's a bold step forward for a team that hasn't appeared in the playoffs in its first two years of existence.

"We're definitely pretty happy, especially after last year," said Rainmen guard Tony Bennett, who joined the team early last season. "That's why I came back this year. I wanted to do something special for the city and we're on the verge of doing it … We just have to keep working hard."

The Rainmen were 6-4 at this time last year and were allowing almost 16 points more per game than their current PBL-best 94.9.

And it's defence that's winning, because they actually scored about eight points more per game last season.

With the lowly Maryland Greenhawks coming to town on Saturday at 7 p.m., the Rainmen will take care not to let their guard down. The Greenhawks are just 2-7 and have only beaten the Quebec Kebs (1-8) and Buffalo Stampede (3-7).

"To be a championship team, you have to play a certain way every time, just like it's an elite team in the league like Puerto Rico, Rochester and Oklahoma," said Rainmen forward Eric Crookshank, who has recorded six straight double-doubles and averages 14.8 points and 11.0 rebounds.

The Rainmen have 11 players on their active roster after Monday's departure of point guard Adris DeLeon.

Devon Norris of Tantallon will remain on the practice roster.

For more Rainmen coverage on Twitter follow: @metrorainmen

Gill's coming to town

- Randy Gill is coming back to the Metro Centre with the Maryland Greenhawks on Saturday at 7 p.m. The Greenhawks, who are visiting the Halifax Rainmen, acquired Gill from the Rochester RazorSharks two weeks ago. A first-team PBL all-star guard, Gill has been unpopular among Rainmen faithful during visits with the RazorSharks and Montreal Sasquatch, often hearing choruses of boos. Gill won $100,000 on the 2003 MTV show Who's Got Game?

Huskies aiming for banner as AUS championships set to begin

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

VOLLEYBALL The Saint Mary's Huskies women's volleyball team surprised everybody — even themselves — this season.

With reigning Atlantic University Sport MVP Kerri Smit on the shelf with a shoulder injury at the start of the season, many pegged the Huskies to finish middle-of-the-pack.



Kerri Smit

But heading into the AUS championship on Friday at The Tower, the Huskies are seeded second after going 11-7 and tying for first with the St. Francis Xavier X-Women.

"Back in September, if you asked anybody, including our players, 'Are we going to finish in the top two?' A lot of them would have said, 'Probably not, maybe down lower in the pack,'" said Huskies first-year head coach Darren Russell. "I think we've exceeded everyone's expectations, honestly."

The Huskies went 4-0 without Smit, who returned for the first game of the second half on Jan. 9. The third-year left-side hitter played her way onto the AUS first all-star team, leading the conference in kills (3.91 per game) and scoring (4.60 points per game) for the second straight year.

More impressive is the fact that she's been playing hurt.

"Her shoulder is actually still torn," Russell said. "We had to change her technique and she's playing through some pain. But it's her choice — she wants to win a banner."

Smit, along with fellow first-team all-star Alison Beaver, libero Keisha Muise and setter Katelyn Cross, are among the Huskies' key players. Cross, a Halifax native, is the only player still around from the last Huskies team that won in 2007.

"The girls are focused," Russell said. "The only thing they have on their mind is winning an AUS banner."

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SCANLIFE

Suns GM says keeping Stoudemire was best option for his team. Scan this code for the story.

Gelinas could be out for season

HERD The Halifax Mooseheads could be without high-scoring rookie Carl Gelinas for the rest of the season.

The 17-year-old has missed the past two games with a knee sprain and could sit out the final 10 games, depending on how quickly it heals. The Mooseheads have a home-and-home with the Screaming Eagles starting Friday in Sydney, with the rematch Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Metro Centre.

"He's going to be out longer than we thought," said Mooseheads head coach and general manager Cam Russell. "It's a possibility (he'll miss the rest of the season). It's a sprain, nothing's torn, but still, when you're dealing with knees, you've got to be careful, and he's out at least a couple weeks."

Third-string goalie Randy Chisholm was sent back to junior A on Thursday because Peter Delmas's hip is healthy enough for him to at least serve as backup. Right-winger Jessyko Bernard (abdominal strain) won't play on the weekend, while blueliner Pascal Amyot (shoulder) will miss at least Friday.

Rookie blueliner Steve Gillard has joined the lengthy injured list with an upper-body injury and is day-to-day.

The Mooseheads snapped a 14-game losing streak against the Eagles on Feb. 6 and are looking for more.

"It's like a little playoff series," said Mooseheads forward Charles Bety. "It's always a good game with them." MATTHEW WUEST/ METRO HALIFAX



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Carl Gelinas has missed the past two games with a knee sprain.



Sato joins IndyCar series

Former Formula One driver Takuma Sato has joined the IndyCar series for the 2010 season. Sato will drive for KV Racing Technology and will join fellow Japanese driver Hideki Mutoh on the 17-race IndyCar series. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

FREE AGENTS Carolina defensive end Julius Peppers, Buffalo wide receiver Terrell Owens and New Orleans safety Darren Sharper are among 235 NFL players scheduled to become unrestricted free agents next month. A complete list of players with at least six seasons in the league and contracts due to expire was posted Thursday by the NFL on NFLLabor.com.

BASKETBALL The New Jersey Nets have reached a deal with the state to move their regular-season games to Newark's Prudential Center for two years until their arena is built in Brooklyn.

TRIAL The Minnesota state lawsuit over the NFL's suspensions of Vikings players Kevin Williams and Pat Williams will go to trial next month. The Williamses were suspended for four games after testing positive in 2008 for a banned substance.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tiger statement hot topic

Golfer set to break his silence

When Tiger Woods makes his first public appearance in nearly three months Friday, the big question is what will he say?

The topic was intriguing Americans — Woods was a trendy subject on Twitter a full day before his appearance.

Almost as intriguing is which "friends, colleagues and close associates" will be in the Sunset Room on the second floor of the Mediterranean-style clubhouse at the TPC Sawgrass.

Woods hasn't been seen in public since crashing his car into a tree outside his Florida home Nov. 27, sparking sordid revelations of infidelity, and he hasn't been heard in the 78 days since a magazine released a voice mail that he allegedly left for one of the women to whom he has been romantically linked, pleading with her to remove his number from her cellphone.

U.S. PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem, who made the clubhouse available and was offering logistical help, has said he would attend, and as many as four other members of his executive staff will be in the room.

A British bookmaker has set odds at 4-to-7 that Woods' wife, Elin, will be with him. William Hill didn't stop there, however.

It offers 8-to-1 odds that Woods will announce he is getting a divorce, 12-to-1 odds that his wife is pregnant and 100-to-1 odds that he is retiring.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



GREGORY SHAMUS/GETTY IMAGES

A British bookmaker has set the odds at 4-to-7 that Tiger Woods' wife, Elin, will be by his side during Friday's appearance.

Raps stand pat at trade deadline

NBA Chris Bosh ambled through a darkened hallway and disappeared behind a set of elevator doors. The Toronto Raptors were still practising, the NBA's trade deadline was fast approaching and it was soon revealed that Bosh, Toronto's unquestioned star, would not be playing in the team's next game.

He had not been traded, though, just injured. The 25-year-old suffered a mild sprain in his left ankle while blocking a shot in Wednesday's overtime loss to the Memphis Grizzlies, and was headed off to see the doctor while his general manager saw what was available at the deadline.

Bryan Colangelo opted not to make a move by the 3 p.m. ET cutoff, leaving his resurgent team untouched, and allowing the speculation to circle around Bosh, who is set to become a free agent this summer.

"Right now, I think Chris is playing very good basketball, and he's a big part of this team," Raptors coach Jay Triano said after Thursday's practice. "My job is to make him want to stay, because we're going to be pretty darn good." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Knicks land McGrady, with eyes on summer

NBA The Cleveland Cavaliers hope they took another step toward keeping LeBron James. The New York Knicks are in better position for a run at him — and a second superstar, too.

And they aren't the only team lining up for a chance to become a summer spender.

The Knicks acquired former scoring champion Tracy McGrady on Thursday in a three-team swap with the Houston Rockets and the Sacramento Kings. The deal left them on the verge of being able to offer two maximum salary contracts to the 2010 free agent class that could be headlined by James.

Amare Stoudemire could be in the market for one if he decides to leave Phoenix — where he'll again finish the season after spending the weeks before the deadline atop the trade rumour mill.

"I've maintained that unless there was something out there that improved our team and put us in a lot better position moving forward, then we weren't going to do anything. And that was the case," Suns general manager Steve Kerr said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Tracy McGrady

SCOREBOARD

NBA

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Denver 118 Cleveland 116 (OT)
Boston at L.A. Lakers

FRIDAY'S GAMES

Cleveland at Charlotte
Denver at Washington
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Milwaukee at Detroit
Toronto at New Jersey
Dallas at Orlando
Atlanta at Phoenix
Utah at Golden State
Boston at Portland



Vote of confidence for women's hockey
International Ice Hockey Federation president Rene Fasel says the women's tournament will remain part of future Olympics despite the fact that the Canada and the U.S. are "on another planet." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver Games

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

What to watch Friday

TVHighlights

1 p.m.: Women's curling
China vs. Denmark (Sportsnet).
3:30 p.m.: Alpine skiing
Men's super-G gold medal (CTV, TSN).
4 p.m.: Men's hockey
Belarus vs. Sweden (Sportsnet).
5 p.m.: Cross-country skiing
Women's 15 km pursuit gold medal (OLN).
6 p.m.: Men's curling
Denmark vs. Canada (TSN).
7:45 p.m.: Skeleton
Men's and women's gold medals (OLN).
8:30 p.m.: Men's hockey
Czech Republic vs. Latvia (Sportsnet).
9 p.m.: Figure skating
Ice dance, compulsory dance (TSN).
11 p.m.: Women's curling
Denmark vs. Canada (Sportsnet).
1 a.m.: Men's hockey
Finland vs. Germany (CTV).

Find a complete schedule of this weekend's Olympic events at metronews.ca.

VANCOUVER GAMES

MedalCount

NATION				TOTAL
U.S.	5	5	7	17
Germany	4	4	3	11
Norway	3	3	2	8
Canada	3	3	1	7
South Korea	3	2	0	5
Switzerland	3	0	1	4
France	2	1	4	7
China	2	1	1	4
Sweden	2	0	1	3
Austria	1	2	2	5
Netherlands	1	1	1	3
Russia	1	1	1	3
Slovakia	1	1	0	2
Czech Republic	1	0	1	2
Italy	0	1	3	4
Poland	0	2	0	2
Belarus	0	1	1	2

Swiss near miss for Team Canada

Shootout win lets Canadians avoid repeat of 2006 upset by Switzerland

Sidney Crosby scored in a shootout as Canada eked out a 3-2 victory over Switzerland on Thursday at the Winter Olympics in a game that evoked scary memories of the Swiss upset win four years ago in Turin.

Canada was stymied for much of the game by Jonas Hiller in the Swiss goal. Martin Brodeur stopped all four Swiss shooters while Crosby scored on Canada's fourth shot to secure the win before a sea of red-and-white clad Canadian fans at Canada Hockey House.

"I look forward to that chance and am glad I made the most of it," Crosby said of scoring the shootout winner.

It was the fourth anniversary of Canada's agonizing 2-0 loss at the 2006 Games when they were stoned by goalie Martin Gerber, who missed these Games with an injury.

This time, it was Hiller who frustrated Canada's collection of NHL stars. The Canadians outshot the Swiss 46-23 in regulation time and overtime.



FERNANDO CARNEIRO/METRO VANCOUVER

Canada's Patrick Marleau attempts to tip a shot past Switzerland goalie Jonas Hiller in first-period action at Canada Hockey Place Thursday night. Canada won 3-2 in a shootout.

"It was one of those nights where he was focused and in the zone," Crosby said of Hiller.

Dany Heatley and Patrick Marleau scored for Canada while Ivo Rutheman and Patrick von Gunten had goals for Switzerland in regulation time.

Bettman

• NHL commissioner Gary Bettman insists there's still plenty of time for an agreement to be reached on further Olympic participation and says his sole focus now is on the tournament currently underway in Vancouver.

The Swiss have only two NHL players, captain Mark Streit and Hiller, but they battled even up for most of the game and gave Canada a scare.

"It was one of the best games I've ever seen from the Swiss national team," Hiller said.

Olympic rules give three points for a win and only two for a win in overtime or a shootout, so Canada has five points from two games, one behind the United States, who improved to 2-0-0 with a 6-1 win over Norway. THE CANADIAN PRESS

With earbuds in, snowboarders call the tunes

PLAYLISTS The crowd erupts as the announcer belts your name and rock 'n' roll echoes from below.

Sounds like the perfect atmosphere to pump up an Olympic athlete, right?

Not on the halfpipe, where snowboarders are rocking out to their own beat.

"It kind of blocks out all the peripherals and when the crowd's down (there) roaring, I'll be listening to like Drop The World by Lil Wayne or something like that," said Canadian Jeff Batchelor, who cranks up his iPod during training and competition.

"I have a pretty killer playlist that I just sort of let run through, but four minutes before my run I like to throw on the Cops theme song Bad Boys."

Rules allow halfpipe riders to listen to their own music at events, including the Olympics, and many are wired for sound when they drop into the pipe.



Canadians snowboarder Jeff Batchelor

Batchelor's current staples include Eminem, Avenged Sevenfold, Jay Z, tracks from snowboard videos and songs from the video game Rock Band.

"I love to rock out on Rock Band and ... when I play Rock Band I'm in a happy place, so if I listen to those tunes I'm in a happy place," he said.

Some listen to fire themselves up, while others try to block out the venue's sound system, which continuously blasts music at the base of the pipe, even during an Olympic event.

"(It's) really funny because sometimes you'll see them bopping away to the beat and it's totally opposite to what they're playing at the bottom," said Canadian halfpipe coach Tom Hutchinson.

"You think like, 'Man, these kids have no rhythm at all.'"

But not every rider wears headphones when they sail down the halfpipe.

Justin Lamoureux, who finished seventh in Wednesday's Olympic halfpipe final, never listens to tunes during competition.

"I was just getting the energy from the crowd," the Squamish, B.C. resident said after the event.

"It's pretty much the chance of a lifetime to have the Olympics at home, in my backyard ... so I just wanted to hear the roar." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Swiss bobsled driver OK after crash

Switzerland's Beat Hefti, the top-ranked two-man bobsled driver in the world, is reportedly OK after slamming his head in a pre-Olympic training crash at the Whistler Sliding Centre. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver Games

Narrow win nets Nesbitt gold

Canadian speedskater brings home medal from long-track race

JEFF HODSON
Metro Canada

For someone who had just gutted out a sensational come-from-behind finish to capture Canada's third gold by only the squeakiest of margins, speedskater Christine Nesbitt is pretty darn hard on herself.

"It wasn't pretty," said Nesbitt, who beat Dutch silver medallist Annette Gerritsen by the razor-thin edge of her skate in the women's 1,000-metre long track in Richmond Thursday.

She won the race by a mere 0.02 of a second and was visibly disappointed as she glanced at her time on the scoreboard. She said she didn't think her time would stand through the final pairing and said afterwards that she "didn't come to the Games to win bronze."

Nesbitt's scathing and unflinching self critique — "I love criticizing myself," she admitted — has transformed the 24-year-old from London, Ont., into the fastest 1,000-metre skater in the world.



ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian speedskater Christine Nesbitt skates with the Canadian flag Thursday after winning the gold medal in the womens 1,000-metre long-track speedskating event at the Olympic Winter Games in Richmond, B.C.

Nesbitt has won all four World Cups this year in the 1,000 metres and held the fastest personal time among the skaters. She was the odds-on favourite, but succumbed to jitters at the start of the race in front of the loud hometown crowd.

"I was really nervous," Nesbitt said. "When the gun went off, instead of skating, I just kind of panicked."

Nesbitt slipped on her second or third step and immediately fell out of rhythm. She was leading her pair at the 200-metre mark, but quickly realized she was off-pace.

"I knew I wasn't skating very well and I felt, with a lap to go, that the crowd went silent, or went a little bit quieter when they saw how far behind I was."

"I was really nervous. When the gun went off, instead of skating, I just kind of panicked."
Christine Nesbitt

It was then, however, that the long hours of training and preparing mentally took over. She drove from about 10th position at the 600-metre mark to finish first. The crowd erupted when she crossed the finish.

Kristina Groves, who captured bronze in Sunday's 3,000-metre race, finished fourth, missing the podium by 0.06 of a second, behind Dutch bronze-medallist Laurine van Riessen.

"That's what it is," said Groves.

"I was lucky the other way the other day: 0.03 to get the bronze. That's the way it goes."

No reason for ski team panic ... yet

WHISTLER It may be too early to panic over the Canadian ski team's dwindling chances of winning three Olympic medals, but a worried finger is hovering over the button.

No one wearing a Maple Leaf waved from the podium after the women's super-combined event Thursday.

It's the third race of the Games where Canadian skiers came away empty-handed.

The men's super-giant slalom Friday will be the next chance for a Canadian to win the country's first Olympic ski medal in 16 years.

The women's super-G is Saturday.

"The super-Gs are two big races," said Max Gartner, Alpine Canada's chief athletics officer. "If we don't have any medals after the super-Gs I'm going to get a little worried.

"We knew it was going to be a tough competition. I think we still have some chances. I'm going to remain optimistic."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Three wise Olympians help put Games in proper perspective



All this talk of "Owning the Podium" is a distraction from what's really happening at the Olympics.

Yes, the fascination with winning is healthy and something to be expected for fans of home country athletes.

But failing to recognize the performances of those who haven't claimed a medal is something to be avoided.

There is, after all, a lot to be said for the struggle and the integrity of the Olympic journey in spite of the fact that it doesn't always culminate with gold, silver or bronze.

A case in point is the experience of three Canadian women who raced in luge at Whistler.

No medals, no prizes to carry home and next to no appreciation of their efforts.

Still, to dismiss the contributions of Regan Lauscher, Meaghen Simister and Alex Gough — athletes who persevered in spite of tragedy and major alterations to the field of play — seems less than Canadian.

Listen to what these three women had to say when their Olympic moment was over.

"It was the race of my life," said Meaghan Simister of Regina.

"It's the Olympics and you have to take what comes," said Alex Gough of Calgary, as she considered the aftermath of a Georgian slider's death, which tainted the competition.

"The greatest advice we get is to expect the unexpected. This was about rising to the challenge and coming through it."

The last word belonged to Regan Lauscher of Red Deer, her third and last Olympic appearance behind her. There were no regrets at not having ascended the podium, but rather another sentiment vastly more important.

"Complete and total gratitude," Lauscher said.

"I feel extremely privileged to be Canadian and a Canadian athlete. It's been an opportunity that I never could have dreamed of in a sport I wasn't sure I wanted to do. Walking away from this with the experiences and friendships and all that I've had ... will be etched in my heart forever."

It wasn't about Owning the Podium for these wise athletes. It was about racing with purpose and dignity.

These are the most important things to possess at any Olympic Games.

Gemini Award winner and author Scott Russell is the Host of CBC Sports Weekend seen Saturday afternoons. A 20-year CBC Sports veteran, he has covered a variety of professional and amateur sports including nine Olympic games and numerous world championships.

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Movies

Alice down under Pg 22



Mia Wasikowska says she was feeling very "bizarre" while filming Tim Burton's take on Alice In Wonderland. See inside for more.

Movies Pg 23



Scorsese takes on the thriller genre with Shutter Island.

Television Pg 29



The late Mamas and the Papas musician chose Canada over L.A.

Television Pg 28



Less Than Kind wants to push boundaries on HBO.

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Through the rabbit hole in 3-D

Life gets curiouser and curiouser for Alice actress

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

Movie feature

Australian Mia Wasikowska might not be particularly well known now, but that's all about to change.

The actress was the surprise choice to play the titular Alice In Wonderland in the upcoming 3-D adaptation by director Tim Burton.

That's a pretty iconic character and giant film to take on for a 19-year-old with little blockbuster experience, but an opportunity that Wasikowska couldn't resist.

"There's a certain amount of pressure that comes with playing a character who is beloved by so many generations," Wasikowska admitted to Metro. "But you just have to keep in mind that you can't really please everyone. It was really important to remember that we were making our version of Alice and to stick with our version. That's something that Tim and I started talking about very early on."

Tim Burton has taken a slightly different approach to the material than expected and Wasikowska promises that audiences will get a new interpretation of Lewis Carroll's classic world and characters.

Alice In Wonderland opens March 5

"Alice is 19 in our story, so she's a very different person than she was when she was seven," revealed Wasikowska. "She comes back to Wonderland without any recollection of the previous visit at that age when young women all of a sudden face new expectations from their family and society. So this movie is about trying to hold onto yourself amongst that and trying to figure out the balance between pleasing others and pleasing yourself."



Alice in Wonderland director Tim Burton explains his vision to Mia Wasikowska, who plays the title character in the upcoming re-imagining of the popular book.

Sounds just like the sort of tale of outsiders fighting for individuality that we've come to expect from Burton in films like Edward Scissorhands and Ed Wood.

To achieve the strange almost living cartoon visual design that Burton was striving for, practically all of the film was shot on a green screen with most of the sets and even some characters animated with computers later.

It was a filmmaking experience unlike anything Wasikowska had done before and one she admits to finding quite odd.

"It was bizarre to shoot in that kind of environment. But I think it worked for this project because it really emulated what I think it's like to be in Wonderland."

The movie will inevitably be a career-changing project for Wasikowska who has quickly gone from an up-and-comer to an actress whose likeness is plastered on billboards and children's toys.

"It's almost like it's not me. Obviously it is, but even when I look at the poster I feel like I'm looking at someone else completely out of context."

Sounds a little bit like going through the looking glass, doesn't it?

On the web

- For movie trailers, screen times and photos, visit metronews.ca/movies

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Avatar book 'epic'
Avatar director James Cameron say his planned book based on the box office hit will not be a novelization, but a "big, epic story that fills in a lot of things." IMDB.COM



Movies

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A-class touch to B-movie

Shutter **Island**

Director: Martin Scorsese
Stars: Leonardo DiCaprio, Ben Kingsley, Mark Ruffalo
Classification: 14A
Rating: ●●●●

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

For years, Martin Scorsese has admitted his desire to have worked in old Hollywood; when directors were hired hands who nimbly changed subjects and genres from film to film.

Shutter Island sees the director slipping into this mode, taking on a thriller with all the familiar trappings of the genre. While the movie does provide the requisite suspense and entertainment, Scorsese also adds his distinct touch to the project, making this B-movie veer dangerously close to becoming an A picture.

If he weren't such a talented personal filmmaker, this guy would be one hell of journeyman director.

Shutter Island stars Leonardo DiCaprio in his fourth consecutive collaboration with Scorsese.

Despite a wonky accent, it's one of DiCaprio's finest hours as an actor, even though multiple viewings are necessary to appreciate all the levels of his performance.



Leonardo DiCaprio, left, and Ben Kingsley star in Martin Scorsese's thriller Shutter Island.

He plays a troubled detective assigned to finding a missing patient in a secluded mental institution. As is always the case in these movies, nothing is as it seems.

The initially helpful hospital staff lead by Ben Kingsley becomes increasingly suspicious as DiCaprio's recurring nightmares start manifesting themselves in the daytime. It all builds towards a big twist that is easy to predict, but one that carries a surprising emotional weight and context that's not quite so easy to see coming.

Scorsese clearly had a ball slumming it with this genre outing.

The movie is filled with loving references to films of the past and impeccably constructed cinematic set pieces.

It's a movie that demands multiple viewings as the first round will play like classy genre fun with a devastating kick in the pants, while the second viewing will feel more like a tragedy.

Whether or not audiences will devote that much time to what seems like little more than fleeting entertainment remains to be seen, but Scorsese is not filmmaker interested in cheap thrills.

Shutter Island is certainly not the director's best work, but it does prove that he is incapable of making a movie without the thought and care of a master.

• For a Shutter Island trailer, screen times and photos, visit metronews.ca/movies

Movie **morsels**

Valentine's Day

●●●

REVIEW For his new romantic omnibus Valentine's Day, director Garry Marshall brings together an overwhelmingly impressive cast, including Julia Roberts, Ashton Kutcher, Anne Hathaway, Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Garner, Patrick Dempsey, Jessica Biel, Bradley Cooper, Jessica Alba, Topher Grace, Shirley MacLaine, Taylor Swift and Taylor Lautner. It's an embarrassment of A-list riches. But so many big stars playing so many characters with so many Valentine's Day-related issues to work out makes the movie feel more than a little crowded. And while there's certainly something for everyone in the interconnecting story lines, Valentine's Day suffers from a supreme lack of focus. At the core of the film are a few very compelling stories played out by very charming actors, but there's too much else going on for the film to stop and give them the time they need.

Ned Ehrbar/Metro World News

The Wolfman

●●

REVIEW The blockbuster Wolfman remake arrives on screens this weekend after countless delays (including the original director quitting shortly before shooting began). That's never a good sign, but with a cast that includes Benicio Del Toro and Anthony Hopkins along with some stunning Gothic production design, it at least looked like the project had a shot at working. Sadly, it doesn't. Though the filmmakers get a number of elements right, they can all be admired on the poster. Once the movie starts playing, disappointment sets in.

Phil Brown/For Metro Canada

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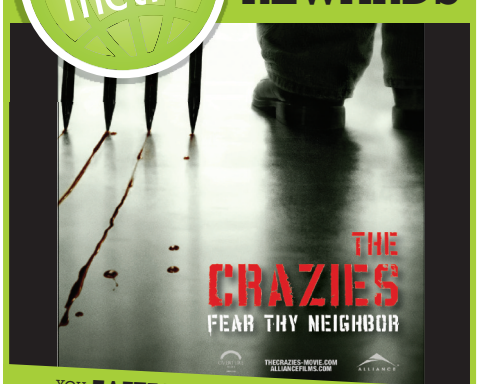
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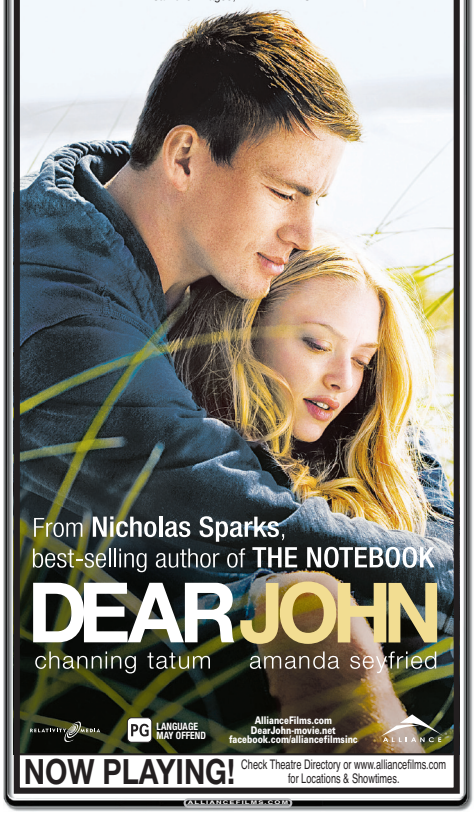
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Messenger director up for Cobain pic

Oren Moverman, Oscar-nominated writer-director of The Messenger, is staying in downbeat land for his next movie — he's in talks to write and direct Universal/Working Title's untitled Kurt Cobain biopic. EMPIREONLINE.COM

Kevin shoots for 'real' on Cop job

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada



Bruce Willis, left, and director Kevin Smith at work on the set of Cop Out.

He may have made nine movies to date, but filmmaker Kevin Smith considers his latest comedy to be his first "real" directing job.

"I'm not a filmmaker," insisted Smith. "I'm a guy who rips open his chest, pulls out fatty chunks of his heart, puts it on a platter, projects it and goes, 'You get it?'"

Not only has that vulnerability earned the New Jersey writer/director a dedicated following since his debut with Clerks but after the disappointing release of 2008's Zack and Miri Make a Porno, it nearly left him devastated.

Cop Out opens next Friday

"I thought I was dead," said Smith regarding the film's sluggish opening. "I thought that either internet (fans) or Canada would take a hit out on me for ruining Seth Rogen's career. Mercifully, by the end of the weekend we were able to get up to a $10 million opening but even that was anemic … I was like 'I give up.'"

In the aftermath, Smith retreated and took up an interest in hockey (he now loves the Edmonton Oilers) which he acknowledges led him "to salvation in some weird way."

Further bolstered by two sold-out speaking engagements in Toronto, Smith realized that he needed to step away from his own scripts and re-establish a new niche in Hollywood. Kismet or coincidence, he soon got the offer to direct Cop Out — a Bruce Willis/Tracy Morgan buddy comedy written by Robb and Mark Cullen.

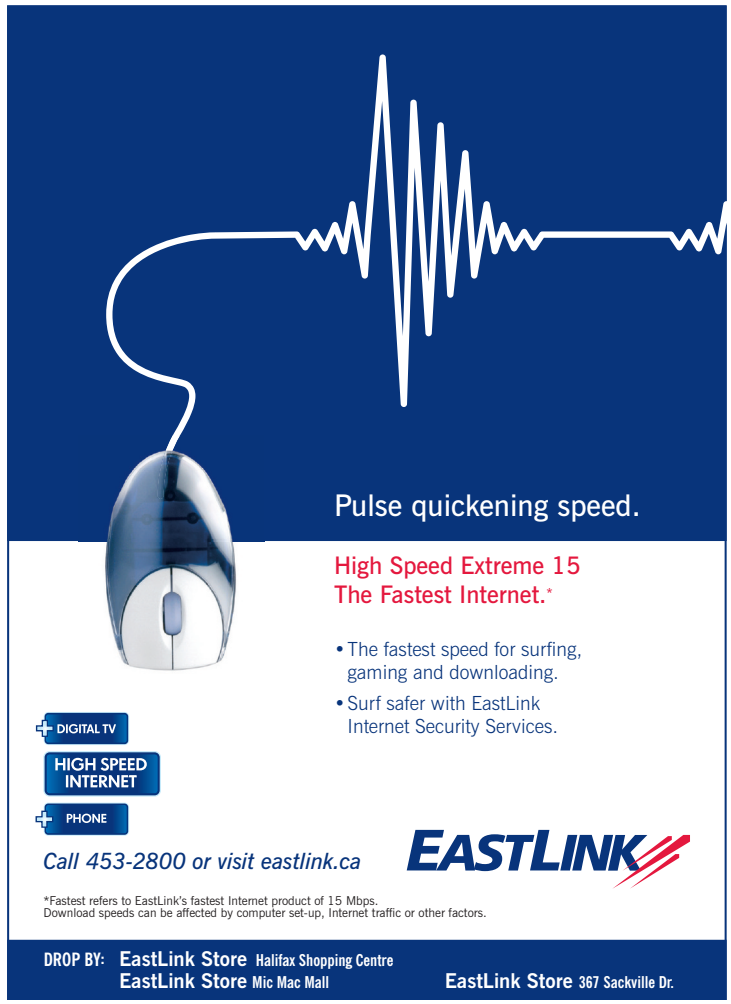
"It's so weird to take such a long journey just to get to the middle," said Smith. "Like I wanted to do something which in one way or another could be defined as average. I was used to tearing my heart out, bleeding and putting it into art and this was not that. This was just let's make a movie. Wouldn't it be fun to make a movie?

As it turns out it was fun. And although Smith will soon return to directing his own script (a hockey movie no less!), the roller-coaster experience has left him feeling refreshed.

"I could see where some person could get lost in this," said Smith. "(With) making other people's movies, there's no chance for heartbreak. Whatever happens to Cop Out now, I know that I did the best job I possibly could."

"I'm not a filmmaker. I'm a guy who rips open his chest, pulls out fatty chunks of his heart, puts it on a platter, projects it and goes, 'You get it?'"
Kevin Smith





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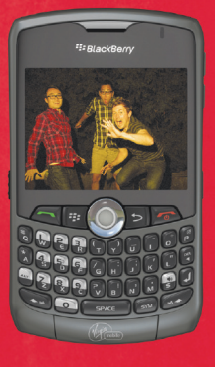
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Damon, Affleck together again

Thirteen years after Matt Damon and Ben Affleck burst onto the scene with Good Will Hunting, the duo is getting back together. According to reports, Affleck and Damon are talking to Warner Bros. to enter into a producing deal with the studio. EMPIREONLINE.COM

Reel Time

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Takes two to tango



Spanish director Pedro Almodovar and actress Penelope Cruz have worked together on a string of acclaimed films.



InFocus

Richard Crouse

metronews.ca/infocus

Last week the internet lit up with news that one of the great actor-director teams might reunite to remake one of their classic films.

Rumours (since debunked) had Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro set to give Taxi Driver the sequel treatment.

It seemed too good to be true — De Niro is busy overseeing the Tribeca Film Festival and Scorsese is occupied with new muse Leonardo DiCaprio — and the rumor turned out to be just that, a rumour.

But for a tantalizing moment it seemed there might be a new film from one of the most dynamic director-actor pairings since Bogart and Huston or Mifune and Kurosawa.

Not that there are any shortage of director-actor teams. Scorsese and DiCaprio's newest bit of teamwork, Shutter Island, opens this weekend and the latest Pedro Almodóvar-Penélope Cruz film, Broken Embraces, was recently nominated for a Golden Globe.

"I think you find, when you talk about a collaboration between a filmmaker and an actor, that it's always evolving," said Shutter Island producer Brad Fischer. "I don't think it begins and ends with any one movie."

Diane Keaton cites the evolution of collaboration with Woody Allen — they made seven films together, including the classic Annie Hall, between 1973 and 1993 — with elevating her from a "novice who had lots of feelings but didn't know how to express herself" to someone who "can be braver and more spontaneous."

"We operate like lovers. So while we don't have the pleasures of sex, we don't have the complications of sex either."
Pedro Almodovar about Penelope Cruz

Penélope Cruz is more effusive when discussing her mentor Pedro Almodóvar, who made her an art house darling, international star and claims to have "saved her from Hollywood."

"He changed the way I looked at the world before I even knew him," she says.

"There is something that works really well in our relationship that combines both our friendship and the professional side," says Almodóvar. "We operate like lovers. So while we don't have the pleasures of sex, we don't have the complications of sex either. We work really well as a couple who don't sleep together."

Sometimes the director-actor relationship extends past the movie set. Four years after shooting The Life Aquatic in Italy, Wes Anderson regular Bill Murray (five films together) asked the director to deliver 10,000 Euros in cash to his former landlord.

"It's not as weird as it sounds," said Anderson on paying the rent a little late. "Bill can be a little weird with time."

Richard Crouse's Movie Show can be seen every Sunday at 6:30 p.m. on the E! Channel; mrchaos33@hotmail.com.



Helen Mirren on the The Last Station platform



Helen Mirren stars in The Last Station, out next Friday.

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren takes on another towering historical figure in The Last Station, playing Sofya Tolstoy, the fiery wife of the great Russian author at odds with his philosophies and disciples.

Q How do you make a character as melodramatic as Sofya sympathetic?

A Because she's a drama queen, you could alienate the audience really fast. You don't want the audience to necessarily like or or love her, but to go along with her. You had to feel that this is just how she felt, this was real for her. When I watch the film, there's one moment when I blow it. I look at that, those awful moments when you see yourself and you go, "Oh, you shouldn't do that. That's wrong, wrong, wrong." And there it is, and you can't take it back.

Q What was it about Sofya that made you want to take on the role?

A Oh, my God. What do you think? That kind of volcanic creature ... Also, I was sent it very soon after I'd done The Queen, and as a actor your dream is to get something that's the opposite of what you've just done.

Q Is playing a countess a demotion after playing so many queens?

A You know, every actress who gets to be the kind of age I am always gets to play a queen or two because very often they are interesting roles that we want to write plays or films about. So it's not just me who gets to play queens. Most actresses have gotten to play a queen or two.

Q And up next you star in an adaptation of Shakespeare's The Tempest, only with a gender reversal.

A It was ... a great Shakespearean role to play, because Shakespeare, damn him, gave crap female roles.



This week's new releases are highlighted in pink.

Screen Times

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., FEB. 19 TO THURS., FEB. 25. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.



Valentine's Day, with its star-studded cast, opened last week.



Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief, with Uma Thurman, opened last week.

HALIFAX

BAYERS LAKE

190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:15

Avatar 3D (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 12:30-1-4-6:30-8-10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 11:20-2:50-5-6:30-9-10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon 12:30-1-4-6:30-10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Tue-Wed 12:30-1-4-6:30-8-10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 12:30-1-4-6:30-10

The Blind Side (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:45-3:40-6:50-9:40

Celine Dion (STC) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2

Celine: Through the Eyes of the World (G) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon 7:30 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7:30

Dear John (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:20-4:20-7:25-10:05

Edge of Darkness (STC) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 3:50-6:55-9:40

From Paris With Love (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 9:50

It's Complicated (PG) Dolby Stereo Fri 12:20-3:20-6:40-9:50 Dolby Stereo Sat-Sun 11:50-3-6:40-9:50 Dolby Stereo Mon-Thu 12:20-3:20-6:40-9:50

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 11:55-2:45-6:25-9:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:20-3:15-6:25-9:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 11:55-2:45-6:25-9:15

Shutter Island (14) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 12-12:20-3:10-3:30-6:35-6:50-9:55-10:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 11:40-12:15-3:10-3:30-6:35-6:50-9:55-10:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12-12:20-3:10-3:30-6:35-6:50-9:55-10:15

Tooth Fairy (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:50-3:40-6:15-8:50

Up in the Air (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 12:45-3:25-6:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:25-3:25-6:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:45-3:25-6:45

Valentine's Day (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 12:30-1:15-3:30-4:20-6:20-7:30-9:20-10:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12-12:30-12:50-3:20-3:50-4-6:20-7-7:30-9:20-10:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Tue 12:30-12:50-1:15-3:30-4-4:20-6:20-7-7:30-9:20-10:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Wed 12:50-3:30-4-4:20-6:20-7-7:30-9:20-10:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 12:30-12:50-1:15-3:30-4-4:20-6:20-7-7:30-9:20-10:15

When in Rome (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 12:45-4-9:55 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 9:55

The Wolfman (18) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 12:35-1:10-3:30-4:20-7:35-7:50-10:05-10:25 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:10-1:10-3:30-4:20-7:35-7:50-10:05-10:25 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:35-1:10-3:30-4:20-7:35-7:50-10:05-10:25

IMAX

190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

Avatar: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 1:30-6:15-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 11:30-2:50-6:15-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 1:30-6:15-9:45

OXFORD THEATRE

6408 Quinpool Rd.
902-423-7488

Crazy Heart (14) Fri 7-9:30 Sat-Sun 4-7-9:30 Mon-Tue 7-9:30 Wed 9:45 Thu 7-9:30

PARK LANE

5657 Spring Garden Rd.
902-423-4860

The Bridge on the River Kwai (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sun 1

Dear John (PG) Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 12:50-3:40-7-9:30-11:50 Stadium Seating Sun 12:50-3:40-7-9:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:40-7-9:30

Edge of Darkness (STC) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:10-4:10-7:10-10 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 4:10-7:10-10

An Education (STC) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1-3:50-6:50-9:10 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:50-6:50-9:10

The Fly (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 11:45

From Paris With Love (14) Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 1:15-3:45-7:30-9:45-11:55 Stadium Seating Sun 1:15-3:45-7:30-9:45 Stadium Seating Mon-Wed 3:45-7:30-9:45 Stadium Seating Thu 3:45-9:45

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus (PG) Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 11:30

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 12:30-3:10-6:20-9-11:40 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sun 3:55-6:20-9 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:35-6:20-9

Shutter Island (14) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:20-3:20-6:40-9:40 No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:35-6:40-9:40

Valentine's Day (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:40-3:30-6:30-9:20 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:30-6:30-9:20

The Wolfman (18) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 1:20-4:7:20-9:50-11:59 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sun 1:20-4:7:20-9:50 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 4-7:20-9:50

THROW A BALL THIS MARCH BREAK
SEE PAGE 35
BOWLARAMA

LOWER SACKVILLE

LOWER SACKVILLE

760 Sackville Dr., Downsview Plaza
902-869-2022

Dear John (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7-9:30 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:20-4:15-7-9:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7-9:30

Edge of Darkness (STC) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:40 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:10-3:45-7:10-9:40 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:10-9:40

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:20-9 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Sun 1-3:40-6:20-9 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:20-9

Shutter Island (14) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 6:45-9:45 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:45-3:45-6:45-9:45 No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:45-9:45

Tooth Fairy (G) Stadium Seating Fri 6:30-8:45 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:30-4-6:30-8:45 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:30-8:45

Valentine's Day (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:50-9:35 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Sun 1:10-3:55-6:50-9:35 Stadium Seating, No Passes Mon-Thu 6:50-9:35

The Wolfman (18) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 7:20-9:40 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Sun 1:45-4:10-7:20-9:40 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:20-9:40

DARTMOUTH

DARTMOUTH CROSSING

145 Shubie Dr., Dartmouth Crossing
902-481-3251

Avatar 3D (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 11:45-12:15-4-4:30-7:45-9 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:15-4:30-7:45-9 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon 2-3-7:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Tue-Wed 2-3-7:45-9 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 2-3-7:45

Celine: Through the Eyes of the World (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon 7:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Thu 7:30

Dear John (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 1:15-4:20-7:20-10:15 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 1:15-4:20-7:20-9:55 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:20-9:55

Edge of Darkness (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 1-3:55-7:05-10:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 1-3:55-7:05-9:40

From Paris With Love (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:45-4:40-7:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 1:45-4:15-7:10

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri-Sun 12:05-3:10-6:40-9:35 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:50-3:50-6:40-9:35

Shutter Island (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 11:30-3-6:30-9:55 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sun 11:30-3-6:30-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:15-3:15-6:30-9:45

Tooth Fairy (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 12:35-3:35-7:15-10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 12:35-3:35-7:15-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 1:45-4:25-7:15-9:45

Valentine's Day (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri-Sat 11:35-12:45-2:30-3:45-6:15-7-9:15-10:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sun 11:35-12:45-2:30-3:45-6:15-7-9:15-10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:20-12:45-3:15-3:45-6:15-7-9:15-10

When in Rome (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 9:40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 9:30

The Wolfman (18) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri-Sat 1-1:30-4-4:35-6:45-7:30-9:30-10:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sun 1-1:30-4-4:35-6:45-7:30-9:25-9:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 1:15-1:45-4-4:30-6:45-7:30-9:25-9:50

TRURO

TRURO

20 Treaty Trail, Millbrook
902-895-8020

Dear John (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 2:40-7:10-9:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 2:40-6:40-9:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:40-9:10

Edge of Darkness (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 7:9-40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 2:30-7:9-40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 2:30-6:30-8:55 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:30-8:55

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 6:40-9:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat 2:20-6:40-9:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sun 2:10-2:20-8:40 Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Mon-Thu 6:10-8:40

Shutter Island (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 6:30-9:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat 2:10-6:30-9:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sun 2:10-5:50-8:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 5:50-8:30

Tooth Fairy (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 7:30-10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 3-7:30-10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 3-7-9:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7-9:05

Valentine's Day (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 6:50-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat 2-6:50-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sun 2-6:20-8:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:20-8:50

The Wolfman (18) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 7:20-9:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 2:50-7:20-9:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sun 2:50-6:50-9 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:50-9

BRIDGEWATER

BRIDGEWATER

349 Lahave St., 902-527-4020

Avatar (PG) Fri 7:30 Sat 2:10-7:30 Sun 2:10-6:45 Mon-Thu 6:45

Dear John (PG) Fri 7:10-9:40 Sat 2:30-7:10-9:40 Sun 2:30-6:25-8:55 Mon-Thu 6:25-8:55

Edge of Darkness (STC) Fri-Sat 9:45 Sun-Thu 9

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (PG) No Passes Fri 6:40-9:20 No Passes Sat 2:40-6:40-9:20 No Passes Sun 2:40-5:55-8:35 Mon-Thu 5:55-8:35

Shutter Island (14) No Passes Fri 6:30-9:30 No Passes Sat 2:35-6:30-9:30 No Passes Sun 2:35-5:45-8:45 No Passes Mon-Thu 5:45-8:45

Tooth Fairy (G) Fri 7:20 Sat 2-7:20 Sun 2-6:35 Mon-Thu 6:35

Valentine's Day (PG) No Passes Fri 7-9:45 No Passes Sat 2:20-7-9:45 No Passes Sun 2:20-6:10-9 Mon-Thu 6:10-9

The Wolfman (18) No Passes Fri 6:50-9:15 No Passes Sat 2:15-6:50-9:15 No Passes Sun 2:15-6:05-8:30 Mon-Thu 6:05-8:30

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While my guitar gently weeps

His plans are in flux, but Kevin Eubanks says that for now he'll still be with Jay Leno when they return to the Tonight Show, but in a reduced capacity. Eubanks reportedly was going to leave at some point after the show resumes March 1. **PEOPLE.COM**

Television

Less Than Kind seeks a kinder audience at HBO

After failing to capture audiences on Citytv, Less Than Kind returns for a second season on HBO Canada with showrunner Mark McKinney touting the premium channel as a better fit for the black comedy.

McKinney says a move up the dial grants the Winnipeg-based series greater freedom to push the boundaries than during its limited run on conventional television.

"The show was always conceived to be quite edgy, quite dark and to take a lot of permission with the subject matter, and now that we're on HBO it just fits like a glove," says McKinney, seated next to star Maury Chaykin for a round of media interviews.

"It's kind of where the show belongs, I think, on premium TV. We make use of it, and I don't just mean by cursing and showing nudity — although there is some of that. It's about the way you can sort of explore a theme."

The serial nature of shows on HBO Canada — home to such daring fare as the polygamy drama Big Love and the vampire romance True Blood — allows Less Than Kind to pursue its long story arcs without fear of losing audiences to surprise schedule changes, McKinney says.

He bemoaned the show's Citytv time-slot — directly after the sensational reality show The Bachelorette — as less than kind to the offbeat series, about the trials of an overweight teen and his overbearing Jewish family.

"We sort of caught a bad break at the beginning because the (Bachelorette), which was scheduled at 90 minutes ... was this runaway hit last year and they extended the show for two hours," notes the writer/producer.

"And because City was trapped into a simulcast they had to bump us, and so we came back on the dial sometime in mid-March."

"It started to build an audience and then the poor audience didn't know where to find it," adds Chaykin. McKinney says the beauty of premium cable is that schedules are generally a lot more consistent and not as "reactive" as on network TV.



The cast of Less Than Kind

Less Than Kind airs on HBO Canada Friday

Things for the Blecher clan don't look good as the new season kicks off with the beleaguered Sheldon and his kin standing vigil at the bedside of their dying patriarch, played by Chaykin. McKinney's Kids in the Hall pal Dave Foley guest stars as Dr. Sheasgreen, a doctor whose efforts to display his skill at comforting the grieving are frustrated when Sam's health unexpectedly rallies.

Other guests this season include George Wendt from Cheers as a biker, and Henry Czerny of The Tudors and The Boys of St. Vincent as a love interest for Sheldon's aunt, Clara.

McKinney says the series is already in development for season three and insists the cast is more enamoured with Winnipeg than ever.

"And, God willing, we do season three, it'll be (shot) in a much warmer environment," says Chaykin, referring to the winter shoots that marked the first two seasons. "People are warning us about the giant mosquitoes."

"And the colour of people's skin in shorts come May," added McKinney. "Apparently that's really frightening, when people first put on their shorts, it's like a scene from Dawn of the Dead."

Less Than Kind airs on HBO Canada on Friday, followed by the debut of the animated Ricky Gervais Show and, later in the evening, the launch of the web spinoff Funny or Die Presents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Octomom checks out The View

TALK SHOW ABC says octuplets mother Nadya Suleman will make her first appearance as a guest on The View next week.

Suleman and her children have been a frequent topic of debate on the weekday talk show, co-hosted by Barbara Walters, Whoopi Goldberg, Joy Behar, Elisabeth Hasselbeck and Sherri Shepherd. She will appear Wednesday on the show.

Widely known as Octomom, Suleman gained international attention last year for giving birth to octuplets, the second full set of octuplets born alive in the United States. She also has six other children. She conceived all her children by in vitro fertilization and she has been criticized for growing this huge family as a single mother on public assistance.The octuplets celebrated their first birthday in January.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Weekdays @ 9pm
101.3 THE BOUNCE
Interactive NINE@9
For February 18th
9 Hedley - Don't Talk To Strangers
8 Rihanna - Rude Boy
7 Drake Ft Kevin Cossom - I Get Paper
6 Girlicious - Over You
5 Down With Webster - Your Man
4 Young Money Ft Lloyd - Bedrock
3 Taylor Swift - Today Was A Fairy Tale
2 Ke$ha - Blah Blah Blah
1 Justin Bieber Ft Ludacris - Baby
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Citytv



Sweet-and-Spicy Chicken Stir-Fry
PREP TIME: 10 MIN. ➤ TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN. ➤ MAKES: 4 SERVINGS
What You Need
1 lb. (450 g) boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
1 Tbsp. oil
3 cups chopped mixed fresh vegetables (red peppers, broccoli, mushrooms)
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 cup Kraft Calorie-Wise Catalina Dressing
2 Tbsp. hoisin sauce
1 tsp. crushed red pepper
Make it
COOK and stir chicken in hot oil in large skillet on high heat 1 min. Add vegetables and garlic; cook and stir 3 to 5 min. or until chicken is lightly browned.
ADD remaining ingredients; cook 2 min. or until chicken is done and vegetables are crisp-tender.
THIS WEEK ON THE SHOW – SPEEDY SUPPERS ➤ whatscookingtv.com

Idols sings for its supper

HAITI RELIEF Kris Allen next week will make his first appearance on American Idol since winning the show last year, to help raise money for earthquake-ravaged Haiti.

As part of the Fox TV show's Idol Gives Back charity effort, Allen will travel to Haiti with the United Nations Foundation. He'll share video from his visit and sing on the Thursday, Feb. 25, episode of American Idol. Idol Gives Back takes place on the April 21 episode of American Idol, raising money for five charities, including Feeding America and Malaria No More.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metronews.ca

Doherty chose Canada over L.A.

There was no California dreamin' for the family of the late Halifax singer Denny Doherty, who co-founded the 1960s sunshine pop group the Mamas & the Papas.

Emberly Doherty, his daughter, says her mother insisted he leave Los Angeles in the 1970s to escape the local rock 'n' roll party scene that sparked his alcohol addiction.

With that, Denny and Jeanette Doherty raised daughter Emberly and son John away from the spotlight in Halifax, Mississauga, Ont., and New York.

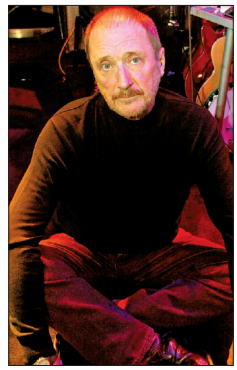
And Doherty says that saved him.

"Thank God he got out of California and got away," Doherty, 28, said of her dad, who is the focus of Sunday's final Great Canadian Biographies instalment on Bravo.

"They say it in the documentary that my mom saved his life. Like, I don't know what would've happened if he had continued down that road. He got out of Dodge."

Here I Am: Denny Doherty and the Mamas & the Papas chronicles the beloved performer's rise from north-end Halifax to the top of the charts with the band that scored hits including California Dreamin and Monday, Monday.

Doherty, who died in January 2007, is also seen in the doc telling his life story in his off-Broadway show Dream a Little Dream, named after late band member (Mama) Cass Elliot's first solo single. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Denny Doherty

FRIDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/19/10	31	31	31	ABC	News Center	World News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	*Meet the Fockers* ★★ (2004, Comedy)			20/20
	7	7	7	ASN	XXI Winter Olympics Figure Skating, Skeleton, Medal Ceremonies. Figure Skating; Skeleton; Medal Ceremonies. (Live)							
	11	11	11	CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	Marketplace	CBC News: the fifth estate		CBC News: The National (N)	The Hour
	32	32	32	CBS	WBZ News (N)	Evening News	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Ghost Whisperer		Medium (HDTV)	NUMB3RS
	6	6	6	CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	NUMB3RS (HDTV)		House "Teamwork"		Shark Tank	News Final (N)
	9	9	9	CJCH	XXI Winter Olympics Figure Skating, Skeleton, Medal Ceremonies. Figure Skating; Skeleton; Medal Ceremonies. (Live)							
	36	36	36	FOX	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	House "Teamwork"		Kitchen Nightmares	Fox First
	12	12	12	NBC	News	NBC News	Access H.	Olympic Zone	XXI Winter Olympics Figure Skating, Skeleton, Skiing, Ski Jumping.			
sports	55	55	55	SCOR	HSR	Covers	Aussie Millions '09		WWE SmackDown!			X-Fighters
	53	53	53	TSN	XXI Winter Olympics Curling, Figure Skating, Skiing, Ski Jumping. (HDTV) (Live)							
cable variety	16	16	16	A&E	CSI: Miami "Collision"		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		Criminal Minds "Jones"		Criminal Minds (HDTV)	Criminal
	70	70	70	APTN	Jeux olympiques d'hiver: Vancouver 2010 Curling masculin.				XXI Winter Olympics		XXI Winter Olympics Skiing.	Jeux
	37	37	37	BRVO	Emily of New Moon		Life of Glenn Gould		Bravo!FACT	Cover Stories	White Collar	Dexter
	49	49	49	COM	Just for Laughs		Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Comedy Now
	18	18	18	CNN	(6) The Situation Room With Wolf Blitzer (N)				Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Cooper 360
	38	38	38	DISC	Cash Cab	How It's Made	Daily Planet (N)		Dirty Jobs "Tar Rigger"		Man vs. Wild		JFK: Inside
	34	48	48	HGTV	Extreme Makeover: Home		House	Property	House	World's	Location, Location, Location		House Hunt
	46	46	46	HIST	Jetman		Ancients Behaving Badly		Nostradamus Effect		*Sahara* ★★ (2005, Adventure)		
	17	17	17	MM	(6) MOD Live at the Base		The Vampire Diaries		*A Walk to Remember* ★★ (2002, Romance)				At the Base
	206	206	206	PIX	(6:25) *The Sentinel*		*The Madness of King George* (1994, Historical Drama)				*The Remains of the Day* (1993, Drama)		
	39	39	39	SHOW	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	Relic Hunter		*Odysseus and the Isle of the Mists* (2008, Fantasy)				Kenny vs.
	40	40	40	SLICE	Whatever	Wedding SOS	Rich Bride Poor Bride		Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part
	21	21	21	TLC	Dress	Dress	What Not to Wear		What Not to Wear		What Not to Wear (N)		Dress
	22	22	22	W	House-Sell	House-Sell	Supernanny		How to Look Good Naked		*License to Wed* (2007, Romance-Comedy)		
	27	27	27	YTV	To Be Indie	To Be Indie	To Be Indie	To Be Indie	The Next Star		That's-Weird	Fries That?	Prank Patrol

SATURDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/20/10	31	31	31	ABC	News Center	World News	Cosby Show	Cosby Show	*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* ★★★ (2004, Fantasy)			
	7	7	7	ASN	XXI Winter Olympics Speed Skating, Bobsledding, Short Track Speed Skating, Medal Ceremonies. (Live)							
	11	11	11	CBC	National	Marketplace	NBA Basketball Washington Wizards at Toronto Raptors.				*Coach Carter* (2005)	
	32	32	32	CBS	WBZ News (N)	Evening News	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy!	NUMB3RS (HDTV)		48 Hours Mystery		48 Hours.
	6	6	6	CIHF	renegade	Jane Show	*The Last Trimester* (2006, Suspense) Chandra West.				Love-Death	G-Spot	News Final (N)
	9	9	9	CJCH	XXI Winter Olympics Speed Skating, Bobsledding, Short Track Speed Skating, Medal Ceremonies. (Live)							
	36	36	36	FOX	Friends	Friends	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Cops (N)	Cops	America's Most Wanted		Fox First
	12	12	12	NBC	News	NBC News	Paid Program	Paid Program	XXI Winter Olympics Speed Skating, Bobsled, Skiing. (HDTV) (Live)				
sports	55	55	55	SCOR	MMA Show	Footy Show	WWE Vintage Collection		Score Rewind	Cabby Unlimit	MMA Fight Night		
	53	53	53	TSN	XXI Winter Olympics Curling, Skiing, Short track Speed Skating, Hockey. (HDTV) (Live)							
cable variety	16	16	16	A&E	CSI: Miami "Rush"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		*The Green Mile* ★★★ (1999, Drama) Tom Hanks.			
	70	70	70	APTN	Jeux olympiques d'hiver: Vancouver 2010 Curling, femmes.				XXI Winter Olympics		XXI Winter Olympics		Olympics
	37	37	37	BRVO	Arts & Minds	Bravo!Videos	Spectacle: Elvis		Star Portraits	Books-Film	*Scent of a Woman* (1992, Drama)		
	49	49	49	COM	VIP	Bet Your Ass	Comedy Now	Comedy Now	Corner Gas	Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	John Oliver
	18	18	18	CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		Newsroom		Campbell Brown		Larry King Live		Newsroom
	38	38	38	DISC	Cash Cab	How It's Made	Cash Cab (N)	Cash Cab	Destroyed	Destroyed	Dirty Jobs		Verminators
	34	48	48	HGTV	House Poor	House Poor	House Poor	House Poor	House Poor	House Poor	House Poor	House Poor	Makeover
	46	46	46	HIST	Ancients Behaving Badly		Nostradamus Effect		Cities of the Underworld		*Men of Honor* ★★★ (2000, Drama)		
	17	17	17	MM	(6) MOD Live at the Base		*A Walk to Remember* ★★ (2002, Romance)				America's Best Dance Crew		At the Base
	206	206	206	PIX	(6) *The Hard Way*		(7:55) *Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins* (1985)				*Raging Bull* ★★★★ (1980, Biography)		
	39	39	39	SHOW	*Star Trk: Cntct*	About a Girl	Slings and Arrows		*The Unquiet* (2007, Suspense) Cara Buono.				*Resident Evil*
	40	40	40	SLICE	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Real Housewives of Jersey		Real Housewives of Atlanta		Real Housewives, Orange		Projct Runway
	21	21	21	TLC	Police Women of Broward		Police Women of Broward		Police Women of Broward		Police Women of Broward		Police Women
	22	22	22	W	(5:30) *Must Love Dogs*		*The Wedding Date* ★★ (2005, Romance-Comedy)				*The Perfect Man* (2005, Romance-Comedy)		
	27	27	27	YTV	Kid vs. Kat	League-Evil	Zeke's Pad	Prank Patrol	The Next Star		That's-Weird	Prank Patrol	Survive This

SUNDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/21/10	31	31	31	ABC	News Center	World News	Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Extreme Makeover: Home		Desperate Housewives		Brothers
	7	7	7	ASN	(7:05) XXI Winter Olympics Bobsledding, Speed Skating, Hockey, Figure Skating, Medal Ceremonies. (Live)							
	11	11	11	CBC	Heartland (DVS)		*Saint Ralph* ★★★ (2004, Comedy-Drama)				CBC News: The National		Doc Zone
	32	32	32	CBS	Evening News	WBZ News (N)	60 Minutes (HDTV) (N)		The Amazing Race 16		Undercover Boss (N)		Cold Case (N)
	6	6	6	CIHF	Global Nat.	16:9-Picture	Brothers & Sisters (N)		The Simpsons	Cleveland	Family Guy	American Dad	News Final (N)
	9	9	9	CJCH	(7:05) XXI Winter Olympics Bobsledding, Speed Skating, Hockey, Figure Skating, Medal Ceremonies. (Live)							
	36	36	36	FOX	NASCAR Racing		'Til Death (N)	'Til Death (N)	The Simpsons	Cleveland	Family Guy	American Dad	Fox First
	12	12	12	NBC	News	NBC News	XXI Winter Olympics Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Freestyle Skiing, Bobsled. (HDTV) (Live)						
sports	55	55	55	SCOR	Score Today		The WWE Experience		MMA Fight Night				Score Now
	53	53	53	TSN	XXI Winter Olympics Curling, Speed Skating, Skiing. (HDTV) (Live)							
cable variety	16	16	16	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Burned"		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		Criminal
	70	70	70	APTN	Jeux olympiques d'hiver: Vancouver 2010 Curling masculin.				XXI Winter Olympics Skiing. (Live)			XXI Winter Olympics	
	37	37	37	BRVO	Spectacle: Elvis		Arts & Minds		Denny Doherty-The Mamas & The Papas		*Forrest Gump* ★★★ (1994, Drama)		
	49	49	49	COM	VIP	Bet Your Ass	Laughs	Laughs	Comedy Now	Comedy Now	The Simpsons	South Park	John Oliver
	18	18	18	CNN	Newsroom		Newsroom		State of the Union		Larry King Live		Newsroom
	38	38	38	DISC	Cash Cab	How It's Made	MythBusters		Storm Chasers Greatest Storms Exciting tornado chases.				MythBusters
	34	48	48	HGTV	For Rent	For Rent	For Rent	For Rent	For Rent	For Rent	For Rent	For Rent	House-Bryan
	46	46	46	HIST	Ice Pilots NWT (HDTV)		Ancient Discoveries		Convoy: War of the Atlantic		*U-571* ★★ (2000, Suspense)		
	17	17	17	MM	(6) MOD Live at the Base		America's Best Dance Crew			America's Best Dance Crew			At the Base
	206	206	206	PIX	(6:15) *Clean Slate*		(8:15) *Wise Guys* ★★ (1986, Comedy)				*Carlito's Way* (1993, Crime Drama)		
	39	39	39	SHOW	*About a Boy*	Kink in Hair	Cra$h & Burn (HDTV)		*The Perfect Assistant* (2008, Drama) Rachel Hunter.				Damages (N)
	40	40	40	SLICE	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part	Til Debt-Part
	21	21	21	TLC	Untold Stories of the E.R.		Untold Stories of the E.R.		Kidnapped for 18 Years		Natalee Holloway: Lost		Reality Loser
	22	22	22	W	*Perfect*	Hollyw'd Best	Supernanny		Come Dine With Me		*Wall of Secrets* (2003, Suspense)		
	27	27	27	YTV	*King of the Camp* (2008, Musical) Justin Stadnyk.				The Next Star		Fries That?	Fries That?	Survive This

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The Billboard 200
1. Soldier of Love, Sade; 2. Need You Now, Lady Antebellum; 3. Another Round, Jaheim; 4. Rebirth, Little Wayne; 5 Haywire, Josh Turner. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Music

Keeping it short and tweet

Social media outlets like Twitter are changing our relationship with music

SoundCheck



metronews.ca/soundcheck

NOTE: This is definitely an article you' ll want to rip out to use for future reference.

In Twitter parlance, Fridays are Follow Friday (or, more correctly, #followfriday), the day on which many users offer suggestions on whom to track. To find anyone or anything listed below, just sign in to Twitter, click "Find People" and enter the name provided. If don't have a Twitter account, getting one is free and easy at twitter.com.

Artists: Coldplay fans — 2.5 million of them — get offers directly from the band or through the mysterious Roadie #42 (coldplay). Weezer is so serious about social media that they take Karl, their webmaster, with them just about everywhere they go. He's how fans first learned about their bad bus crash (WeezerOfficial). Sloan likes to connect fans to new songs (Sloanmusic). And check out Courtney Love's grammatically and politically incorrect screeds (CourtneyLoveUK).

Music News: Most music magazines and websites offer Twitter alerts with breaking news or links to interesting stories. Britain's NME (NMEmagazine) does a great job as does Spin (SPINmagazine) and Rolling Stone (RollingStone). Highly underrated is Canada's FYI Music (fyimusic), which is a great aggregator of content.

Music Writers and Bloggers: Many writers of music columns for newspapers push out their own tweets in real time. Neil McCormick, who writes for London's Daily Telegraph, offers amusing tweets as he flits between gigs and interviews (neil_mccormick). Bob Lefsetz is the music industry's most outspoken critic and is a must read (Lefsetz). And when Billboard's Glenn Peoples links to something with his tweets, I'm guaranteed to click through (billboardglenn).

Record Labels: Most labels have figured out that Twitter can be an excellent promotional tool for their artists with offers, contests and news. Follow Sony (Sony_Music), Universal (Universal_Music), EMI (emimusiccanada) and Warner (warnercanada). Indie MapleMusic is also very good (maplemusicrecs).

Follow Alan and the rest of Metro' s music writers on Twitter: **@TheMetroMusic**

A great place to find more people and things to follow is at wefollow.com. And you are following Metro, right? You can follow Metro's music writers from across Canada at twitter.com/TheMetroMusic.

Me? I can guarantee you lots of music news, opinion and links by following ExploreMusic, my web-and-radio thing (ExploreMusic). And I'm posting music and tech stuff to my personal feed (alancross) from everywhere all the time. For example, I'm in Oslo, Norway, today. Find out why with a quick follow.

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Entertainment in brief

OLYMPICS When he was asked to perform at last week's Olympic opening ceremonies in Vancouver, Leonard Cohen basically told organizers "hallelujah" for k.d. lang.

Adam Cohen, the son of the singing, songwriting icon, revealed in an interview this week that organizers wanted his father to appear at the kick-off ceremonies last Friday for the Olympics in Vancouver.

"We're all huge fans of k.d. lang," Adam Cohen said, referring to members of his family. "She's exquisite, and in fact there was a moment where people were pressing quite hard to invite my father to participate. "But we knew k.d. lang was going to be there, and what more do you need?" Cohen, 75, is currently on the mend after suffering a back injury while exercising earlier this month.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Which paint dries faster?



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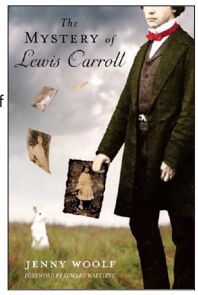


Gilmore movie adaptation
Alexis Bledel has a lot on her plate, but Gilmore Girl fans will be happy to hear that she won't rule out a movie adaptation. "I don't know what the story would be, but I would be curious to find out what it would be," she said. **POPEATER.COM**

Going Out

Metro's 7th Heaven: Metro taps what's hot right now

1 The Mystery of Lewis Carroll: Jenny Woolf



BOOK Prepare for the rabbit hole (Tim Burton's film version of Alice in Wonderland's out March 5) with this new biography of the famed author. British journalist Jenny Woolf's chronicle digs deep into some of the rumours that have surrounded the writer over the years: Was he a pedophile? Was his most enduring character based on Alice Liddle?

2 Odd Blood: Yeasayer

ALBUM Brooklyn's where it's at. Like their burrough peers TV On The Radio and The Dirty Projectors, the New York City trio play hard at being avant-garde pop stars. The band's second album is as much a curve ball as their debut, but tracks like Ambling Alp might just land them on the charts.

3 Heavy Rain



GAME If experts are to be believed, this title will revolutionize the world of video games. The noirish PlayStation3 thriller takes interactivity to cinematic heights. Shave, shower, do the grocery, bribe people, beat the hell out of someone — there are plenty of options at any given time, which ultimately affects the outcome of the game.

4 The Damned United

DVD Soccer fan or not, this was arguably the best sports film — yes, not The Blind Side— released in 2009. British thespian Michael Sheen is on the ball with his portrayal of legendary soccer manager Brian Clough, who made a living out of transforming minor clubs to league champs only to fall flat during his short tenure with '70s powerhouse Leeds United.

5 Shutter Island

FILM Master filmmaker Martin Scorsese returns to Cape Fear territory with this psychological thriller based on a Dennis Lehane novel. Will it reach the heights of Oscar-winning The Departed? Probably not, but Marty and his muse, Leonardo DiCaprio, stil pile on the dread.

6 Leonard Cohen

MUSICIAN OK, some credit goes to K.D. Lang for her haunting rendition of the singer-songwriter's Hallelujah at the Olympics opening ceremony. But the fact that the song was one of the highlights of a night not short of spectacle speaks volumes for Cohen's enduring influence.

7 Hotdos clibrary.ca

WEBSITE Fans of Canadian documentaries can now get their fill online. The Hot Docs documentary film festival is making hundreds of titles available for viewing at hotdocslibrary.ca. The library offers free access to films by some of the country's leading directors, including Allan King.



Mix of Six

Mesa

When: Until March 6
Where: Neptune Studio Theatre

Starring Lee J. Campbell and Rhys Bevan-John, this two-actor play is comedic in nature, but also tries to be heartfelt as it tells the story of a man and his grandson-in-law taking a five-day road trip from Calgary to Arizona. Visit neptunetheatre.com.

QMJHL Hockey

When: Sunday, 7 p.m.
Where: Halifax Metro Centre

The Halifax Mooseheads can't afford any more losses or it's basically going to be lights out for the playoffs. They're opponent on this afternoon is provincial-rival the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles. Tickets are $14.50.

Halifax International Boat Show

When: Until Sunday
Where: Exhibition Park

If you love boats and want to get in the mood for summer, this is the show for you. There will be seminar presentations, boats galore to look at lots of other things. Visit halifaxboatshow.com.

Premier Basketball League

When: Saturday, 7 p.m.
Where: Halifax Metro Centre

The Halifax Rainmen haven't lost at home and are challenging for first place in the league. They'll look to keep things going as the Maryland Greenhawks come to town. Tickets are $19.50 and $24.50.

Brides 2010

When: Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Where: World Trade and Convention Centre

Atlantic Canada's largest bridal show with more than 125 exhibitors and two spectacular fashion shows. Tickets are $12. Visit brides2010.com.

Symphony Nova Scotia

When: Friday & Sunday
Where: Rebecca Cohn Auditorium

The provincial orchestra is getting together for a pair of performance this weekend. It will be playing with local musician Jenn Grant on Friday then for a special concert titled Holly's Magic Brush on Sunday. Visit symphonynovascotia.com.

Entertainment in brief

PEOPLE Hollywood actor and web-savvy activist Ashton Kutcher says he will "crowd source" questions about the Kremlin's push to develop a Russian Silicon Valley to his 4.5 million Twitter fans. The actor is part of a U.S. delegation of technology and social media leaders that arrived in Moscow as part of White House efforts to improve ties with Russia. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**



Halifax singer-songwriter Meaghan Smith has been called the female version of Michael Bublé.

Singer creates her own brand of vintage

PHILIP CROUCHER
philip.croucher@metronews.ca

Meaghan Smith is being compared to some pretty elite company.

One Ottawa newspaper reviewer said the Halifax singer-songwriter reminds her of a female version of Michael Bublé.

Another so-called expert — a vintage Lady Ga Ga. Not too shabby, to say the least.

Yet, while humbled by such comparisons, the 30-year-old Smith hopes this month's worldwide release of her debut album, The Cricket's Orchestra, will pave the way towards the day when her vintage style of music is seen as her own.

Take it one step further, and maybe people will even start being compared to her. "I wouldn't mind that," Smith told Metro this week in a phone interview.

However, Smith knows she's not there yet. As she so rightfully puts it when talking about being compared to others, "that's what's going to happen until I establish myself."

The release of her album earlier this month is a great start. What's even better is the positive reaction it has been getting both from the public and musical critics.

"It can kind of mess up your head a little bit," Smith admitted. "Everything has been really positive.

"Not that I was expecting a negative response. I've just been feeling overwhelmed by it."

Smith's debut CD has a sound reminiscent of the '20s, '30s and '40s — a style that "greatly moved" her when she grew up listening to it in her native London, Ont.

But Smith has put her own twist to the style, with a lot of her inspirations coming from old movies she watched growing up, including such Disney cartoon favourites as Cinderella and Fox and the Hound.

"With this record, I didn't want to recreate a music from an era that's already been done," she explained. "A lot of what I did is upgraded it."

And she's continuing that trend now. She's already in the studio working on her next album. "I think my next album is going to be a continuation of what I've started with the sound I found," she said.

Rowling facing plagiarism lawsuit

J.K. Rowling finds herself in the middle of a plagiarism lawsuit, eonline.com reports. The Harry Potter author has been added to a suit which claims Rowling stole the idea for the fourth book in the series. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Entertainment

Fey to return as Palin

SNL alumni likely to reprise role as politician in April

Tina Fey will probably reprise her famous impression of Sarah Palin when she hosts Saturday Night Live in April, the comedian told The Associated Press.

"It's inevitable that we'll try it, at least," Fey said in an interview Tuesday. "We'll see if it makes it to air."

Officials at the NBC sketch show wouldn't comment; SNL generally doesn't discuss any planned sketches, given that much can change even in the hours before show time.

Fey's performances as the former Alaska governor and Republican vice-presidential candidate were an icon of the 2008 campaign and drew huge ratings for SNL.



Tina Fey as Sarah Palin

Fey made four appearances on the show as Palin, earning her an Emmy in September for guest actor. She was also voted 2008's AP Entertainer of the Year.

The comedian said the whole experience was "a little overwhelming."

"It was the strangest thing that's ever happened to me," Fey said. "I've never had anything fall in my lap like that. Everything is usually me trying to convince the people of Earth that it's OK for me to perform. ... That felt like the opposite."

Palin also made a cameo on SNL, briefly appearing alongside Fey in October 2008. Afterward, Palin said she had fun on the show and would do it again if asked.

In her memoir, Going Rogue, Palin wrote that she grew up watching SNL.

The 39-year-old Fey was a head writer and cast member of SNL before leaving to create the sitcom 30 Rock, on which she stars.

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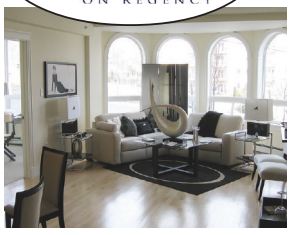
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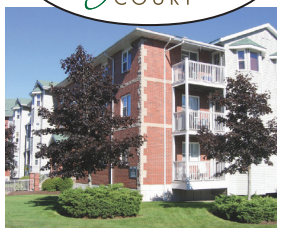
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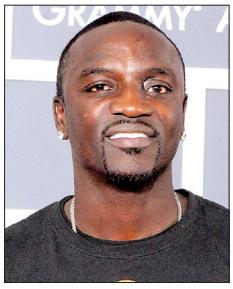
BUILDING EXCELLENCE FOR OVER 15 YEARS

Viera hosts Real Housewives
You've been warned, Meredith Viera. The Who Wants to Be a Millionaire host will welcome the hair-pulling and table-flipping stars of Bravo's Real Housewives franchise, starting Monday. TVGUIDE.COM

Entertainment

Akon going Gaga

Sure, Akon has a new album coming out this year. But thanks to Lady Gaga, he doesn't really need it — financially at least.


Akon

"She's pretty much retired me," the singer said of Gaga, who is signed to his KonLive imprint at Interscope Records. "She was definitely a blessing. She came at the right moment. I'm glad I believed in her, boy. That goes to show you, if you believe in something strong enough, it will pay off."

Gaga, one of last year's top-selling artists, was dropped from at least one major record label. She was available just as Akon closed his deal with Interscope chairman Jimmy Iovine, the Senegalese singer said in a recent interview. "And I was like 'Yo, I want to sign that right there. She needs to be under my umbrella,"' Akon said. "Jimmy was like 'Yeah, whatever you want. Take her. Let's get it done.' And she just blossomed into a super megastar, man."

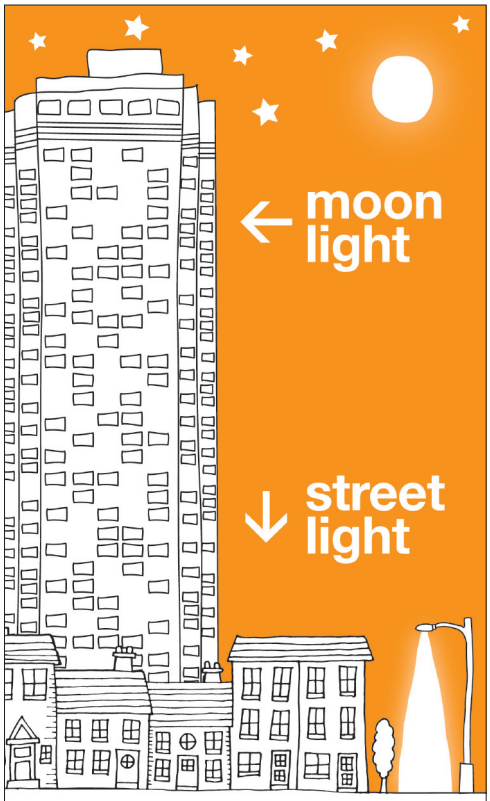
Gaga is one of several artists to be featured on Akon's next album. Others include Dutch dance DJ-producer Chuckie and David Guetta, the exuberant French producer behind The Black Eyed Peas' smash I Gotta Feeling who recently collaborated with Akon on Sexy . . .

Akon says he's not the only one energized by the merging of Euro house beats with American R&B melodies and hip-hop rhythms.

"You've got some straight hardcore hip-hop guys actually moving into the dance realm," Akon said. "And that's shocking. When you've got someone like Dr. Dre about to do a dance record ... that's crazy." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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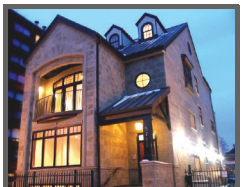
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Bun came home!

In what may be the happiest story of the month so far, West Coast Choppers bad boy Jesse James has found his dog CinnaBun, who went missing three weeks ago. The West Coast Choppers Web site declares "CinnaBun Is Found!!!" METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

He's been a very bad boy

WELL, AT LEAST SARAH AND HER DAUGHTER THINK SO Bristol Palin apparently thinks her baby daddy, Levi Johnston, is a big fat liar ... and she's subpoenaing CNN and Playgirl to prove it, TMZ reports.

The lawyer for Sarah Palin's daughter is scoffing at legal documents filed by Levi's lawyer — documents claiming Levi made but a pittance over the last few years and should not have to pay $1,688.42 a month in child support — which is what Bristol wants.

Levi says the best he's done in the income department so far is last year — claiming he made approximately $101,000.

TMZ reports that Palin's not buying it, because her lawyer issued subpoenas today to CNN, Playgirl, Entertainment Tonight, The Insider, Star Magazine, and National Enquirer, asking for hard figures on how much they paid Levi.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Giving some Leo insight

NOW CAN WE TALK ABOUT WHAT A STELLAR ACTRESS THIS GIRL IS? Emily Mortimer and Leonardo DiCaprio may have worked closely for months together in Martin Scorsese's new psychological thriller Shutter Island, but when it comes to the personal life of the man she calls "the world's most gorgeous movie star," the new mom admits she hasn't a clue, people.com reports.



Asked about the recent rumblings that DiCaprio may finally settle down with longtime girlfriend Bar Rafaeli — despite some occasional bumps in their relationship and his rep's denial the duo became engaged — Mortimer, 38, let out a laugh and said, "I didn't know he wasn't married!

"I'm sure that he will, yes, and be very happy."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Myth #76: sons need their fathers

THE NANNIES WILL BE GREAT AT PLAYING CATCH ... AND TEACHING HIM SPANISH Kourtney Kardashian has reportedly split from Scott Disick, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The 30-year-old socialite is said to have ended her romance with the father of her two-month-old son Mason because she felt "trapped" and was growing increasingly frustrated with him.



"Kourtney resents Scott for his behaviour," a source told In Touch magazine.

"They fight about almost everything when they're together."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

From the mouth of babes

THE TRUTH HURTS LIKE A NEEDLE IN THE ARM Courtney Love claims her estranged daughter has no confidence in her comeback, femalefirst.co.uk reports.



The 45-year-old rocker is about to return to the music scene with new album Nobody's Daughter but received very little support from 17-year-old Frances Bean, who she lost custody of in December.

"One time, Frances was being mean and said, 'What are you going to do if the record fails?'" Love, the widow of Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, told Spin magazine.

"Well, Frances, it can't fail because I love it, and I've worked really hard to make sure that I love it."

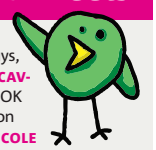
Love is currently embroiled in a custody battle over Frances, who is living with her grandmother Wendy O'Connor and Cobain's sister Kimberly Dawn Cobain after Frances took out a restraining order against her mother.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



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CelebTweets



Don't worry guys, **KRISTIN CAVALLARI**'s OK and not on drugs, **NICOLE "SNOOKI" POLIZZI** — the next American guidette is in London? **LINDSAY LOHAN**'s ignoring real life and her dad Michael tries to save her (but that's nothing new), and **SPENCER PRATT**'s new yoga practice has some unintended side effects.

@KristinCav: To all my fans: PLEASE don't believe what u read and hear this wk. Its NOT true!!! I am happy and HEALTHY

@Snooki: Just did an interview for the uk and let me tell ya I friggin love their accents! Ellow my british gweedows

@lindsaylohan: ignoring real world issues/reality

@MichaelJLohan: @Lindsay-Lohan...., need to have a serious PRIVATE talk...

@spencerpratt: I have proven that KUNDALINI YOGA taps your Feminine power in your body because I find myself crying now at least once a day!tweet?



GETTY IMAGES

METRO WORLD NEWS

Big fat wedding

TULLE! MORE TULLE! Simon Cowell is planning the "biggest showbiz wedding for years," reports femalefirst.co.uk. The music mogul's friends have confirmed he proposed to girlfriend Mezhgan Hussainy on Valentine's Day and are amazed at how happy the make-up artist is making him.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

It's all about the music, baby

OH, AND THE SEX AND DRUGS, OF COURSE The soap opera starring Steven Tyler and Joe Perry just keeps getting more convoluted, popeater.com reports.

Aerosmith — the whole band — has been tapped to headline the Download Festival in June, even though recent news reports suggested the iconic rock group was moving on without their troubled lead singer.



In a statement on the festival's site, Tyler said, "In the early days of Aerosmith we were infected with the vibe coming out of the UK with the Yardbirds, Blues Breakers, Pretty Things and the Stones and we wanted what they had bad.

"So baby, we're coming home. Rock & Roll can be pure sex and we can't wait to Download ..."

Relations between the two old friends have been tenuous at best since last August when Tyler plummeted off a concert stage and months later entered rehab for pain killers.

Official channels within the Aerosmith machine have yet to comment on the booking.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Can you feel the love tonight?

THEY SURE DID Elton John slept with David Furnish after their first date, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer — who wed the Canadian filmmaker in December 2005 — was smitten with his future spouse the first time they met and took him out for dinner the next day and afterwards they spent the night together.



"I was attracted to David immediately. He was very well dressed, very shy. The next night we had dinner," he said.

"We fell in love very quickly."

The pair met during a dinner party at John's house in 1993, after the pop star begged a friend to introduce him to new group of people.

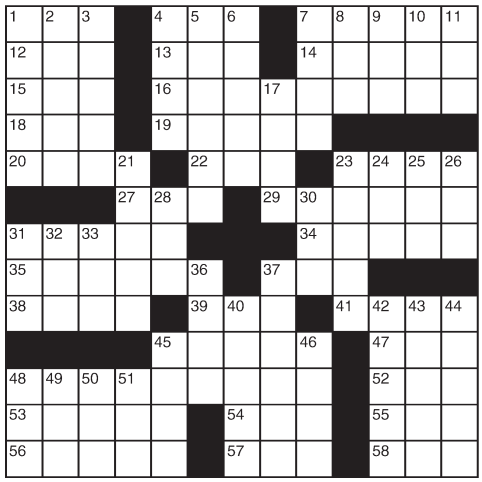
John also revealed to Parade magazine he and Furnish write love notes to each other every week, to keep the romance in their relationship alive.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Today Rain and snow 60% 2°/ -2°
Saturday Flurries 60% 2°/ 0°
Sunday Rain and snow 40% 2°/ -2°
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For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five



ACROSS

1 Priestly robe
4 Uncooked
7 Refuse to, quaintly
12 Up to
13 Blond shade
14 Eagle's nest
15 Sapporo sash
16 Hoard
18 Chaps
19 "1984" laborer
20 Letter opener's creation
22 Mimic
23 "— Misbehavin' "
27 Attention-getting cry
29 Lots
31 External
34 Battery inventor
35 Easy-to-build house
37 Scratch
38 Coloration
39 Honest politician
41 Redact
45 Boutique
47 Away from WSW
48 Sweden's capital
52 Conditions
53 Half-diameters
54 Mid-May honoree
55 Collection
56 That is (Latin)
57 Pigs' digs
58 Attempt

DOWN

1 Fermi's bits
2 Written slander
3 Filled, folded pancakes
4 Grate
5 Off course
6 Jubilant yell
7 Benefit
8 With it, once
9 Onassis, familiarly
10 Zero
11 Ball-bearing item
17 Chanteuse Laine
21 Robbery
23 Worship
24 Under the weather
25 Bottom line
26 Airport screeners' org.
28 Detergent brand
30 Eventual aves
31 Make up your mind
32 Swiss canton
33 Sawbuck
36 Dog owner's ordeal
37 Dry red wine
40 Times of prosperity
42 Believer of a sort
43 Draw a conclusion
44 Irritable
45 "SNL" segment
46 It long eluded Lucci
48 — Lanka
49 Youngster
50 Rhyming tribute
51 USSR successor

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

8				7				4
	4				2	6	5	
	2		6	3				
	9					4		
3		2				8		7
		1					3	
				1	3		8	
	8	3	9				6	
5				2				9

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

A	P	T		M	I	N	E		B	R	O	S		
F	R	O		O	P	E	D		O	A	T	H		
T	O	M	A	T	O	E	S		O	N	T	O		
		A	S	H		D	E	S	K	T	O	P		
W	I	L	K	E	S		L	E	I					
I	L	L		R	U	B		E	S	T	O	P		
M	I	E	N		P	A	M		H	O	B	O		
P	A	Y	E	E		T	O	N		M	O	O		
			T	N	T		D	O	R	M	E	R		
C	R	O	W	D	E	D		B	U	Y				
L	I	M	O		T	O	M	O	R	R	O	W		
A	C	E	R		R	O	A	D		O	N	E		
W	O	N	K		A	R	T	Y		T	O	E		

5	2	6	8	7	4	9	1	3
7	4	9	1	5	3	2	6	8
1	3	8	2	6	9	5	7	4
6	1	7	4	8	2	3	9	5
4	5	3	9	1	6	7	8	2
9	8	2	7	3	5	6	4	1
3	6	4	5	9	8	1	2	7
2	9	1	3	4	7	8	5	6
8	7	5	6	2	1	4	3	9

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca



Metro Recipe of the Day



Orange-blossom Lamb

INGREDIENTS:
8 lamb chops
2 tbsp (25 ml) butter
1 can orange juice concentrate, thawed
1 medium onion, sliced
2 tsp (10 ml) soy sauce
1 tsp (5 ml) salt
Dash pepper

METHOD:
1) In large skillet, brown lamb chops in butter over medium heat. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.
2) Reduce heat; cover and simmer 20-25 minutes or until meat is tender, turning once. To serve, spoon sauce over lamb.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!
Reader's Digest HEART ATTACK!

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Something will not work out the way you expected today but there is no need to panic because in the short-term it does not matter.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Something will happen over the next day or two that encourages you to reconsider a belief or opinion that you have never had cause to question before.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
You don't need anyone's approval to follow a course of action that is right for you both financially and emotionally.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
You may be well organized but not everyone is as in control of their lives as you are, so make allowances.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
Everything will go well for you today so long as you don't get distracted by things that are of no real importance. Don't waste time on trivialities.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
If someone offers you their help today you should think long and hard before you accept.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
The reason a loved one is acting a little bit cold towards you at the moment is because you said or did something they do not approve of.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
You have been working too hard of late and need to go easier on yourself over the next few days.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
You have allowed too many people to get away with too many things in recent weeks and now you have no option but to reassert your authority.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
Some of the people you will have to deal with today don't know how to think logically or act in predictable ways, and there's not much you can do.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
Do something out of the ordinary today. Do something that even by your madcap Aquarius standards is a little bit over the top.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
If you are having doubts about a commitment that only a short while ago you thought was going to be the making of you then pull out while you still can.

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